

War without End: Status Dynamics in a Balinese Village and Beyond

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Except where otherwise acknowledged, this thesis reflects my own research and analysis.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the conflict between two incompatible ideologies in a Balinese village community and the wider society. Social stratification of a variety closely resembling Indian caste society was introduced into Bali from five to eight centuries ago through contact and eventual invasion by the Hindu-Buddhist East Javanese kingdom of Majapahit. Dutch colonial administrative practices rigidified this "caste" system in Balinese society, which remains today as a systematic division of society into a traditional elite - a small minority (some ten percent) - and a "commoner" majority. The elite groups are themselves ranked in a hierarchy of status mirroring the Hindu Indian system. These groups maintain group integrity through preferential endogamy norms and hereditary recruitment on agnatic lines. Based on scriptural dharma prescription, the "caste" elite claim prerogatives as supreme ritual officiants and wielders of temporal power.

These claims have been increasingly contested as remnants of a feudal past by low-status Balinese in the post-Independence era. More particularly, the ideology of hierarchical status has long had to co-exist in Bali with a rival ideology - that of the egalitarian community. In this world-view, all citizens are equal and united for the common good of the village or hamlet settlement. Both ideologies claim divine sanction, and villagers are obliged to accommodate both in their daily lives.

In the fieldwork community, factionalism had developed along "caste" status-group lines, particularly among some members of the highest-ranking group (Brahmana). This separatism threatened the established communal solidarity expressing the ideology of egalitarian community. Divisive factionalism however was not supported by all members of the elite, with many prepared to uphold the communal solidarity ethos in community-focused contexts where hierarchical status was virtually effaced.

Ethnographic data is adduced to illustrate both the extent of devotion to the egalitarian community ideal by villagers of all status rankings, and, conversely, the continued support by many low- "caste" villagers for the principle of hierarchical status, by which the latter are accorded an inherently inferior social position. The ongoing tension between the two ideologies is the "War without end" (Geertz and Geertz, 1975:167); this thesis describes the state of the "War" in the fieldwork village and other places linked to it, and the likely developments in the post-New Order Indonesian political climate.

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Chapter One: Inequality and the Balinese Context

Introduction

This thesis examines the interplay of two mutually incompatible ideologies of equality and inequality in the social dynamics of members of a South Bali village community that I will call Sepenan and of other Balinese with links to that village.

Most of the Balinese population acknowledges the existence of a systematic social stratification derived from and resembling Hindu caste society, in which some ten percent of Balinese are members of a caste-like elite, the Triwangsa or "three peoples". This hereditary elite, also known (as in India) as the "twice-born" (*dwijati*), espouse with varying degrees of conservatism the hierarchical world view of caste. In this view, the caste elite comprises three major groups, ranked in status according to the scriptural (Vedic) prescription: the Brahmana, caste of priests, mediators with the divinity; the Satria, divinely-ordained rulers of the temporal realm; and the Wesia, the farmers and merchants. Beneath this elite in status and opposed to it in terms of lacking the ascribed Triwangsa attribute of the second birth¹ is the Sudra majority (called in Bali *anak jaba*, "outsiders").

There is however no equivalent in Bali to the Indian Hindu "untouchable" social category. The Sudra majority are not in my experience subjected to the extremes of treatment handed out to status inferiors in Indian society². There was much greater casual, everyday interaction between villagers of low and high status in my fieldsite village than that found in India. However, status differences are marked by rules of commensality and preferential (once mandatory) endogamy, and an apparently universally respected convention of language register usage. The latter functions to underline the respective statuses of interlocutors, with "rough" Balinese words used to and about people of low status, and "refined" or "very refined" words used in reference to high-status people.

The Balinese version of caste, which I prefer to call *kasta*³ to differentiate it from the Indian version, has a relatively high profile in both vernacular and scholarly discourse about Balinese society. The evocative Indic terminology and theatrical ceremonial of the high-*kasta* elite (notably the former kings, the *rajas*), described by C. Geertz in his *Theatre State* (1980), has ensured that the hierarchical world-view of *kasta* has received plenty of attention.

A fundamentally incompatible Balinese world view - that of the egalitarian community in service of its members and the gods - has received less attention (although recent authors have begun to redress this balance, notably Howe, 1989 and 1991; Warren, 1993). Geertz and Geertz (1975) also recognised that the Balinese concept of *seka* - the status-effacing common-interest group - applied in popular thinking not just to local gamelan orchestras and coconut squirrel-chasing groups but to whole villages and their constituent *banjar* wards. The ideological tension between the hierarchical and the egalitarian-communal ideologies was characterised by these authors as "Homo hierarchicus and Homo aequalis are engaged in Bali in war without end" (1975:167).

The following Chapters provide a brief summary of inequality theory and factionalism, with reference specifically to the Balinese case. The views of proponents of a Dumontian hierarchy analysis for Balinese society are canvassed, along with more eclectic approaches. Reference is also made to the Sudra title-groups. These groups, like the *kasta* status-groups, claim a supra-village or pan-Bali orientation, and sometimes contest the claims of the hierarchical *kasta* groups to superior status.

Ethnographic evidence is then adduced to illustrate how residents of the fieldwork village and, in particular, the *banjar* in which I lived accommodated in practice to the inherent clash of the ideology underpinning the status position of high-*kasta* villagers and that underlying the egalitarian *seka* world-view revered by village and *banjar* members - including high-status members themselves. The threat posed by status-based factionalism to the ritual and secular solidarity of the village and *banjar* is seen to be in a rather fluid balance with the threat of ultimate isolation of high-status groups from *banjar* support, should they become too exclusive in their ritual and other dealings with the surrounding populace.

The impact of modernisation and the Indonesian government administrative system further complicates the interplay of ideologies. *Kasta* ideals seem to triumph when a Satria "prince" is elected government village head; yet high-status individuals must abandon most of the prerogatives of the *kasta* elite when engaged in community ritual activities and secular activities conducted under village or *banjar* auspices. The success of certain of the *kasta* elite in infiltrating the state political system and reaping its benefits is contrasted with the failure of other members of the traditional elite to attain even a semblance of the lifestyle appropriate (as Weber would put it) to their social status.

The "war without end" is ultimately seen to be an appropriate metaphor, although the ideological battleground is seen to be located as much within individuals and particular groups as it is between groups of people defined by the possession or lack of traditional status. What this thesis aims to contribute to the analysis of Balinese social stratification is not merely a micro-scale illustration of ideological tensions within the fieldwork

community in a changing world. I also aim to provide an increased realisation of the complexities involved when people who believe that they are part of a divinely-ordained hierarchical elite simultaneously believe that they are an important part of a community whose egalitarian basis also has divine sanction (as the ritual village and its wards - respectively the *desa adat* and *banjar adat* - are believed to have).

Inequality, Factionalism and the Common Good

Community Ideals and Factional Realities

Written in a very different time and place, a famous egalitarian manifesto⁴ had as its first article:

Men are born and remain free and equal in their rights; social distinctions can only be based on the common interest.

However laudable, it is of course naive to imagine that there could ever be, in any human society, an agreed "common interest" that all members of society, as individuals and as members of groups and factions, would invariably put before their own personal and group interests. This is not to say, however, that the *ideal* of the common interest could not exist in society, and indeed potentially be a powerful motivating force. What needs to be acknowledged is that people universally find themselves members of sub-groups (based on kinship, ethnicity, class, status, and any number of other criteria of differentiation) within their wider societies. Such sub-groups have their own interests and agendas.

Very often, the interests of particular sub-groups do not coincide with those of other groups or with those of the community as a whole. Conflict arises, and the overall "common good" becomes elided, ignored, or conflated (sometimes deliberately, sometimes unconsciously) with the group interests of the interested parties. Anthropology has tended to favour homogeneous depictions over the reality of factionalism. The Balinese material which I present below is, I think, an illustration of the complexity that communal factionalism can attain - approaching, in its theatrical expression as much as its flexible, contested ideological basis, the status of an art form.

Social life often places the individual in a quandary, when personal ideas of what is relevant or advantageous can be problematic, even bewilderingly so, and must be balanced against possibly conflicting group solidarity demands by family, clan, local community, and other claims on the individual's loyalty (whether in specific contexts or in an ongoing, overall way). Fredrik Barth, writing on Balinese society, notes Coleman's (1986:8) analytical distinction between "natural persons and corporate actors", and finds that "[t]his dilemma - between separate, individual interests and the embeddedness of individuals in social groups, public roles, and "society" writ large - can deteriorate into a battle for a modicum of autonomy ..." (Barth, 1993:74).

He therefore exhorts us, in our ethnographic endeavours, to eschew any structural-functionalist tendency to "depict people's lives within a paradigm based on principles of recruitment and the formal composition of groups and gatherings" (ibid:104). Such methodology, he asserts, condemns the participant observer to remaining "limited to seeing people enacting their statuses" when instead we should "strain to discover the concerns of people" (ibid:105).

People's "concerns" are naturally multiple and complex. Desire for individual fulfilment of basic necessities (shelter, sustenance, affection, a feeling of belonging, sex, etc) co-exists with a felt need, inculcated since early childhood, to perform adequately in a variety of social roles, in a multiplicity of mundane and ritual contexts. In Bali, perhaps to an exceptional degree, my impression is that all this takes place in a general atmosphere of critical observation by one's peers - a keen yet casual sort of observation, but ever-present. In this I have some sympathy with the views of Barth's partner Wikan (1990), although I would not go so far as to say that Sepenan villagers were obsessed by fear of the disapproval of others (and possible black magic revenge).

But my main point is that one of the concerns felt to at least some degree by people who happen to belong to established, named status-groups - specifically, in Bali, the *kasta* groups - is very often to uphold group solidarity vis-à-vis other groups and the community at large. Members of these status-groups have a ready justification for the assertion of group difference in the hierarchic *kasta* ideology underpinning their group existence. People who are not members of the *kasta* elite (which represents only some ten percent of the populace) may nevertheless claim membership in one of several named non-*kasta* clans with their own claims to prestige and grounds for group solidarity.

All of these groups assert their unique identities - and, in the case of the *kasta* groups, their inherent, ideologically-sanctioned superiority - in various ways. Many of these ways will be touched upon in following Chapters - from high-*kasta* ritual prerogatives to routine status acknowledgment through deferential language register use and body language.

To investigate such behaviour and motivations is not necessarily to see the whole society as merely a system of interconnected groups and their formal/ritual relationships. It is simply to acknowledge, in the Balinese case, that social status is one of the major concerns of an influential minority of the society, and that, more widely, group identification and solidarity is a concern of many more Balinese than only the *kasta* elite minority. Indeed, in the case of some non-*kasta* title-groups, the basis of group solidarity is conceived in part as actively opposed to the status "pretensions" of the *kasta* groups (see section on Sudra title-groups, below).

Group solidarity can be a powerful motivation to construe the "common interest" as what is best for the group, and this may not be compatible with the wider society in which group members live. For example, an elite group may feel that an ideologically-prescribed contamination results from contact with certain non-elite members of society (as happens in the Indian caste case), and so refrain from such contact. In the absence of any ideological imperative for inclusive community interaction, such separatism is feasible in practice. The society functions through complex rules of contact and interaction between people of intermediary (hierarchical) status; the system works to prevent the ideologically inauspicious contact from occurring.

In Balinese society, an ideological imperative for inclusive community interaction - indeed, community interdependence - does exist. This is the egalitarian-communal ideology of the village community and its constituent ward (*banjar*) communities, mentioned above. The ideological force of this communalism, and its essentially egalitarian nature, are expressed in ritual and secular contexts at both village and *banjar* level (as illustrated particularly in Chapters Five and Six). Allegiance to the "common interest" represented by this communalism - basically, mutual aid in time of civil or ritual crisis, and maintenance of physical infrastructure and community harmony - was sometimes challenged in the fieldwork community by the assertion of status-group solidarity in contexts where egalitarian community solidarity (still allegedly subscribed to by the status-groups) should have prevailed.

Factionalism by *kasta* status-groups or by some of the more conservative members thereof, and to a considerably lesser extent by non-*kasta* groups, was a constant sub-text to the daily practice of communal solidarity that I witnessed in Sepenan. Villagers identified with their village and, particularly, their *banjar* of residence, their *kasta* status-group or non-*kasta* title-group (if they were members of such), and their extended kingroup (either corporate, as in the *dadia* studied by Geertz and Geertz (1975), or at least their relatives who shared an ancestral *kawitan* origin shrine). Added to these criteria were political affiliations and membership of cliques gathered around powerful individuals. These affiliations implied demands on the loyalty and energies of individual villagers that

sometimes conflicted with devotion to the ideology of the paramount importance of the community common good.

Status in Bali: an Overview

As far as I know, there is no volume specifically devoted to the subject of contemporary social status in Bali, although the subject is alluded to in most writings on Balinese society, so pervasive is the concept in that society. Clifford Geertz's *Negara: the Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (1980) is largely an historical interpretation of status and hierarchy and their relation to politics, and Geertz and Geertz's *Kinship in Bali* (1975) gives considerable attention to the topic. Other authors (Boon 1977, 1990; Guermonprez, 1990b; Howe, 1989, 1991; Warren, 1993; Ottino 1994; Duff-Cooper, 1993) have had something to say on the issue of Balinese social stratification, from several theoretical viewpoints, and I shall refer to these at the appropriate places in what follows.

Early travellers to Bali wrote, naturally enough, about what most impressed them there. They concentrated on grand spectacle and were shocked by outlandish practices such as high-status widow-burning at the cremations of royalty (Vickers, 1989:14). Needless to say, the lavish ceremonialism those writers observed at events such as weddings, tooth-filings and (particularly, in Bali) funerals reached its greatest heights when the individuals concerned were members of the most prestigious status-groups. The funerals of kings (*raja*) represented the archetypal occasions of pomp and circumstance - and this has remained the case in Bali until recent years. The lavish funeral ceremony held in the 1980s for the *raja* of Gianyar was a case in point.

In *Negara*, C. Geertz paints a picture of 19th-century Bali as a society in which the masses were enthralled by the ideology of *kasta* status and its expression in grand court ceremonialism. The peasantry co-operated in the expensive, time-consuming rituals of the prestigious status-groups, we are led to believe, because of a shared adherence to the hierarchical *kasta* ideology. The power which the elite exercised was really "the accumulation of prestige" (1980:24). Those of lower prestige automatically acquiesced in the ceremonial and other demands (corvée labour, military service, taxation) of the elite because that is what the ideology of status prescribed. That is, the low-status masses served their prestigious "betters", the high-*kasta* Triwangsa (especially the Satria *rajas* and their vassal princes), while both peasant "stage crew" and high-*kasta* "impresarios" combined to perform elaborate ritual ceremonies, the staging of which was the duty of the

ruling elite (to order human society by enacting, on earth, a symbolic re-creation of the supernatural world). In this way, wrote Geertz, "Power served pomp, not pomp power" (1980:13), where the pomp was not a mere epiphenomenon of political power, but the very essence of the *negara*, the "theatre state" of 19th-century Bali.

This extraordinary interpretation of power in the service of an ideology of ceremonialism attracted sharp responses from many quarters (e.g. Schulte Nordholt, 1981; Warren, 1980; Connor, 1982; Thomas, 1994:92-94). The implied irrelevance of the factors of coercion of the peasantry and control of material wealth (especially productive land) by the high-*kasta* elite was also criticised by these reviewers.

Geertz's emphasis on the theatrics of power, and an associated downplaying of the "village republic" model of Balinese peasant society, meant that he largely overlooked the relevance of a contrary trend: an egalitarian ideology of community subscribed to by village and *banjar* ward members, including high-*kasta* members. This communalist ideology, like the *banjar* community organisation itself, doubtless long pre-dated the arrival of Hinduism and the idea of *kasta*⁵. With the 14th century Javanese Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit entry into Bali, hierarchical status in a Hindu idiom was implemented in the court environment.

That ideologically-informed inequality existed in Bali long before the Majapahit influx can be inferred from the various classes of persons found by Korn (1984:301ff) to be recognised by members of the "Bali Aga" village of Tenganan. Korn found a complex system of ranked categories of officials, with preferential endogamy norms in place, and distinct dualistic organisation based on putative descent from two legendary progenitors - one the village founder, the other the source of spiritual guidance.

For the Hindu-Javanised majority in Bali, however, the *kasta* social paradigm has been established - at least in court circles - since the 14th century, and remains in existence in present-day Balinese society, where the *kasta* elite are represented in the majority of settlements across the island. The Triwangsa are of course absent from those few Bali Aga villages (mainly in the mountainous interior) which have resisted Hindu-Javanese acculturation. Howe (1989) finds a degree of mixing of egalitarian, indigenous social organisation with the hierarchical *kasta* paradigm in settlements located between the sparsely-populated mountains and the densely-populated southern lowlands. He suggests that the agriculturally poor upland villages held little attraction for the ruling elite of the southern kingdoms, and thereby escaped the material depredations of the latter - in the process also escaping the influence of *kasta* ideology.

This seems a plausible hypothesis, although I have reservations about the existence of the overall native egalitarianism he proposes for the upland, Bali Aga villages (cf. the Tenganan example mentioned above). This is not to say that egalitarian sentiment or even ideology was not embraced in those settlements with respect to a conception of community, village unity/cohesion, or similar ideal of the common good. Indeed it is my thesis that such an egalitarian ideology did exist, even in pre-Majapahit Bali, and continues to be of great importance for Balinese today, regardless of their *kasta* status position.

Before turning to a more detailed consideration of the Triwangsa/*kasta* status-groups themselves, it may be useful first to note briefly the historical and prehistorical settings and journeys which have culminated in contemporary Balinese society. (The term seeks not so much to reify any homogeneous, island-wide consensual "society", but rather to acknowledge that informants do have a sense of overall identity as Balinese. This is largely in contradistinction to other ethnic groups (e.g. Javanese, Bugis, etc) and religions (a perceived and vaguely feared monolithic Islam in particular)⁶; and in an ambivalent way, to the nationalistic super-identity "Indonesian").

The Austronesian connection

The origins of contemporary Balinese society are Austronesian; the common language is a Malayo-Polynesian dialect which predated the Hindu/Sanskrit influence which reached its peak with the mass migration of the East Javanese Majapahit court to Bali in the fourteenth century AD. Swellengrebel (1984 (1960):8) makes the point that Balinese (including the status-marking "high" language as well as the common tongue) has a similar position in the Indonesian language family as does English in the Indo-Germanic family. Modern English is the result of a pre-existing, Germanic language, much influenced for historical reasons by Latin and French, while in the Balinese case, a pre-existing Austronesian language has, again for reasons of history and foreign domination, been much influenced by Old Javanese and Sanskrit.

In both cases, elements of the languages of foreign overlords entered the local languages, both as necessary labels for new cultural concepts, and as prestige nomenclature for existing elements (for example "beef"- *boeuf* - and "mutton"- *mouton* - are early French-derived, prestigious designations for the Old English equivalents in use at the time of the Norman conquest). In the same vein, Balinese (like modern Javanese) today exhibits well-developed language registers, with many "aboriginal" terms having their prestige equivalent, for use in speaking to or about high-status persons (for example, "to eat" is *medaar* (common speech), but *ngajeng* (polite speech), *miyun* (only to high

kasta people), or, to very high status personages - basically Brahmana high priests - *ngerayunan*). Javanese and Sanskrit derivatives are much in evidence in the high speech registers, concerning especially the attributes and behaviour of priests and other members of high-status title-groups (Clynes, 1989).

The common tongue, however, remains a modern reflex of a several-thousand year old Malayo-Polynesian language brought by the Austronesians, who settled the Philippines, Borneo and Sulawesi, and the Indonesian archipelago, but only succeeded in establishing coastal beachheads along the New Guinea coastline, before moving East, relatively quickly, and colonising the Pacific. In Bali the population appears to be basically Austronesian in origin; East of Bali, closer to New Guinea, there is an evident clinal shading of Austronesian and Melanesian features (Bellwood, 1985).

There are intriguing resemblances between elements of present-day Balinese and Pacific/Polynesian cultures. The Dutch colonial scholar Liefcrinck (quoted in Swellengrebel, 1984(1960):28) notes that the standard form of temple layout in ostensibly Hindu Bali owes nothing to Indian temple architecture and everything to prehistoric megalithic Indonesian culture. As Liefcrinck asserts, "In ancient Indonesia and in Polynesia the sanctuary was always an open space, usually surrounded by a wall and often paved with great stones" (*ibid*). A comparison of a typical Balinese temple, sketched in Covarrubias (1972 (1937):266), with reconstructed Polynesian examples, notably an Hawaiian *heiau* temple (Bellwood, 1978:329-360)) shows a near identity in design.

Modern Balinese temples are indeed of this type, the megaliths of former times refined over time (as Liefcrinck believes) into shrines and god-seats (*pelinggih*, literally "seats" in the high language), but sometimes still in the form of simple megaliths, albeit reduced in size, as in the origin temple (*pura puseh*) in Sepenan, my fieldwork village. Furthermore, studies of Balinese communities which have resisted Hindu-Javanese influence (the so-called Bali Aga, although the term is controversial⁷) show marked similarities with Polynesian cosmologies and social structures⁸.

The similarities between Polynesian and Balinese concepts of status are also striking. The Polynesian data, although of course not unaffected, like Bali itself, by a history of European influence, can still illuminate the issue of status in Bali, an earlier Austronesian society which has been drastically affected by Hindu-Javanese enculturation yet retains aspects of an older, putatively Austronesian social order. A succinct illustration of this cultural blending in Bali is the common exclamation "Dewa Ratu!", which combines the Sanskrit-derived *dewa* (god) with the Malayo-Polynesian **ratu* (a title of high rank, still found widely in the Pacific). The following section raises briefly the issue

of performance expectations found to accompany high status in Polynesian societies, with analogous findings in the Balinese case.

Ascribed status and performance criteria

In his excellent *Ancient Polynesian Society*, Goldman (1970) provides valuable insights into both the issue of status in Polynesia, and the theoretical consideration of status itself as a social phenomenon. Goldman is at pains not to reify "status" and "status systems", which he acknowledges - perhaps over-cautiously - as "theoretical constructs of the observer" (1970:6). This is not to deny the salience in particular societies of ideas of ranked or hierarchical social worth (which are theoretical constructs of the "natives" too), but rather to maintain a circumspect overview of the phenomenon, the better to avoid the theoretical pitfalls of reductionism - which can easily produce a rigid, one-dimensional and ahistorical model of status "systems", as if such systems always determine social behaviour, in an unambiguous, prescriptive fashion, and never the other way around.

As a corrective to this, Goldman contends - I think quite rightly - that unqualified dichotomous distinctions of ascriptive versus achieved status are shown to have little analytic value when applied to his Polynesian data. He points out that the single status criterion of hereditary rank nowhere operates in isolation from other factors, including especially criteria of achievement which can be highly relevant to the actual status picture in real-world societies. With the issue of Polynesian hereditary succession to the chieftainship in mind, Goldman asks:

An abstract model can readily distinguish ascribed from achieved status, but historical reality is ambiguous. When the heir apparent must meet standards of achievement to inherit the office, what do we call it? (1970:5)

The expectation of achievement by Balinese claimants to hereditary status accords with Goldman's implication; to be born into a high-status group brings with it a sharing in group prestige, but also carries with it a presumption of manifest ability and exemplary behaviour befitting the holders of such status, particularly for the political-military *kasta* status-group (the Satria). The higher the status, the greater the expectation. This "performance" expectation of high status individuals is illustrated in the case of the Sepenan village head, a Satria man, who disappointed many of his constituents after they elected him to the post on largely status criteria (Chapter Five).

Balinese history provides numerous demonstrations of the "bending" of ascriptive rules, such as those regarding kingly succession, when the indicated candidates prove to be unsuitable or, more precisely, unworthy⁹. I will have more to say later about the hereditary status-group from which the kings and princes came, the Satria. Here I only

note, in the context of the expectation of achievement by ascribed status-holders, that the very word Satria (or Ksatria) is synonymous in Indonesian and Balinese with bravery and honour (in a rather chivalric sense). This is seen for example in Indonesian newspaper reports about disgraced politicians, who are often exhorted to act in a "Ksatria" manner by stepping down (that is, taking responsibility rather than trying to weasel out of the consequences of misdeeds). It needs to be added that such a positive view of what it means to be Satria is of course part of, and bolsters, an ideology which claims innate superiority for the Triwangsa "nobility", of which the Satria *kasta* is a prominent member.

The Brahmana too were not free of performance expectations linked to their high status. Rubinstein (1991:66) recounts a story from a version of the Babad Brahmana historical chronicle, wherein a ruler sacks a *pedanda* high priest whose supernatural powers were not strong enough to make the souls of the cremated deceased visible. The priest's brother, also a *pedanda*, could perform this feat (he was *sakti* - see below) and was duly appointed court *pedanda*.

On the other hand, people of low "traditional" status at birth could achieve enhanced standing through excellence in socially-valued fields such as those of military prowess or artisanal skill. This would obviously constitute achieved status; my point for present purposes is to emphasise that such status often has beneficial consequences for "commoner" individuals and families vis-à-vis the holders of hereditary status. For example, warriors of distinction could gain appointment to high office in the king's service, regardless of humble origins. In Bali, faithful servants of the palace were often rewarded with such elevated status, sometimes marked with an honorific title which was then passed on to descendants¹⁰. These titles however do not connote the type of hereditary charisma implied by the *kasta* and certain non-*kasta* groups with specific ideological claims to status.

By the same token, individual members of the king's own status-group and other hereditary status-groups were certainly also capable of excelling in these military, artistic, and intellectual areas, thereby actively bolstering their more ascriptive claims to prestige and prerogatives. Examples of such interweaving of ascribed and achieved status in the current, self-consciously "modernising" context (and the debate on the relative merits and relevance of these categories, and on the occupational exclusivity claimed by some groups, for example the Brahmana high priesthood) will be found in ensuing chapters, covering my fieldwork observations.

***Sakti*: divine efficacy transcending status**

A final parallel that I want to mention between Polynesian and Balinese, indeed Indonesian, social status is the concept of personal power or puissance, akin in its supernatural origins to Weber's "charisma", known ubiquitously in the Pacific (among Melanesian groups also) as *mana*, and in Indonesia by the Sanskrit-derived *sakti*. Note that in European tradition, such potency was associated with royalty, and vestiges of the idea can still be seen today, for example when the late British Princess Diana visited sick children in hospital and practiced what was in effect the "laying on of hands", once believed to be more efficacious than medicine in curing the severely ill.

The laying on of hands was and is still also practiced by the clergy in Europe. However, I would argue, with Weber, that the clergy could not in general be said to demonstrate charisma in their own right, but rather act as more or less direct impersonal conduits for divine grace - as it were, *ex officio*. The routinisation of charisma, its attachment to the office rather than to the "chosen" individual, is more pronounced in large, highly bureaucratised clergies of which the major world religions are examples. The religious basis of charisma is nevertheless still demonstrated in the person of the occasional charismatic cleric - the American evangelist Billy Graham or the late Iranian cleric Ayatollah Khomeini are examples. The case of the Catholic Pope seems to be more a case of "official" charisma, with perhaps some scope for recognition of especially charismatic individual Popes - Pius XII would perhaps be a recent example.

Royalty, wherever it remains in the world today, tends still to exemplify the more personal touch of true charisma, rather than the "official" charisma of bureaucracies. Coercion and tyranny often play a part in the maintenance of ruling institutions like royalty, but from an ideological perspective, such institutions can be socially acceptable, despite the excesses of rulers, when there is a belief in the inherited ability of rulers, often in partnership with a priestly clique, to link society and the cosmos - for a perceived overall social good (Anderson, 1972).

Now *mana* in the Pacific, and *sakti* in Indonesia, is certainly associated with high office and high status; it can even be argued that there is a higher popular requirement that individuals in these high-status positions should exhibit supernatural competence - in Goldman's terms, there is "an expectation of notable efficacy or the ability to control powers" (1970:9). Indeed the divine ancestry of Polynesian chiefs meant automatic possession of *mana* (see also Sahlins, 1971:9).

But neither *mana* nor *sakti*, evidently the same principle in both areas, is the sole prerogative of high-status groups. On the contrary, this divinely bestowed "ability to

control powers" is potentially available to any member of society. The Melanesian "big men" show their possession of *mana* (the concept is widespread in Melanesian as well as Polynesian groups) through their success in accumulating and distributing wealth and attracting dependent clients¹¹. In Bali, *sakti* is a more directly spiritual matter, but still has absolutely no necessary link with ascribed status; it is a spiritual potency theoretically achievable by anyone, typically through the practice of prescribed ritual and austerities, but bestowed only if the gods please. More precisely, *sakti* is a sharing in the same energising force that activates the gods - hence the awe and respect (but not necessarily admiration¹²) accorded to individuals believed to have this ability.

In short, in Bali, members of high-status groups are expected to be likely to exhibit (more correctly, to be) *sakti*, but the possibility is there for anyone to do so. The ability can be pursued, cultivated, studied for - but, ultimately, the gods decide who will be granted the privilege, who will have the "talent". Linda Connor (1982) has recorded the story of a Balinese spirit medium (*balian*) who attained great community respect and a far-flung reputation. This woman was not born into any hereditary status-group, and went through a period of what might be called significant mental instability, before successfully taking up a vocation as a *balian*. Such practitioners are, when in trance during a seance, vehicles of the gods' speech and, as such, are *sakti* personages¹³.

Connor saw such practitioners, of low ascribed status but high community prestige, as "peasant intellectuals". Both in their non-ascribed community status and in their evident mastery of at least a limited body of esoteric ritual knowledge, Connor saw a popular counterbalance to the hegemony over the "high" religion (claimed by the Brahmana) and, if I read her correctly, the general "efficacy" or charisma claimed by the high-status *kasta* groups. I think that the label "intellectuals" for the Balinese shamanic practitioners is probably a Gramscian overstating of the case. One of the truest aphorisms ever used by C. Geertz in reference to Balinese religion states that most Balinese are mainly interested in "orthopraxy, not orthodoxy" (1973:177) - which certainly accords with my experience in the field. I return to this issue in the Sections below, covering *pemangku* temple priests and *balian* spirit mediums.

But the point remains that the general possibility of becoming *sakti* represents a "democratic" remedy for the population at large to any claims of exclusive rights by certain groups to intercourse with the divinity and/or demonic forces, and the charismatic status entailed thereby. Again, however, the universal potential accessibility of *sakti* means that people of high ascribed status as well as low can add the aura of *sakti* to their hereditary status. Below and in succeeding chapters there appears an individual from my fieldwork locale who was a prime example of this aggregation of status categories. This man combined in his person the hereditary *kasta* status of a Brahmana with the achieved

status of university education and high office in the bureaucracy (in his case, as often in Indonesia, correlated with personal wealth), and for good measure a reputation as a successful *balian* spiritual healer (and therefore *sakti*) as well. His *sakti* efficacy however had reportedly declined in recent years.

The only other personality in the village believed to be *sakti* was the death temple's (low-*kasta*) *pemangku* priest. In the former case, a reputation for being *sakti* enhanced the *kasta* status of a Brahmana notable, whereas in the latter case, it added to the aura of spiritual competence of a "people's priest" - thereby reinforcing the prestige of such practitioners vis-a-vis the Brahmana *pedanda* high priests.

Triwangsa (*kasta*) hierarchical status-groups

The Triwangsa, literally the "Three Peoples", today represent the claimed descendants of East Javanese dignitaries of the Majapahit dynasty who established themselves as overlords in neighbouring Bali during the decline of that dynasty, approximately from the mid-fourteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries AD. These are the groups referred to with the epithet *kasta*, as they employ group names and some practices obviously derived (via Hindu-Buddhist Majapahit) from the Indian Hindu *varna-jati* system known in the West as caste.

Bali had kings long before the arrival of resident Javanese rulers¹⁴. However, present-day descendants of the Satria, the post-Majapahit "traditional rulers" of Bali, trace their descent from the Javanese noble Dalem Ketut Kresna Kapakisan. This notable was the envoy of the king of Majapahit, sent in 1352 AD to establish strong government in Bali at a time of apparent chaos. According to a Satria genealogical document, the Babad Dalem (1993), Kapakisan had more of the sacred than the secular in his own genealogy: his grandfather had the Brahmanic title Danghyang, and his mother was an angel from heaven (*bidadari*), no less (1993:9). He set up court in Bali, surrounded by *sakti* advisers; whatever the debate about divine kingship in Indianised Southeast Asia, the Satria in Bali today certainly assert the principle for their founding father Kapakisan, who *dianggap penjelmaan Dewa Wisnu* ("was regarded as an incarnation of the [great Hindu] god Vishnu") (1993:10; my translation).

This of course was a direct appeal to the divine as legitimating the status of the ruling *kasta*, who could then claim that their rule on earth was justified as mirroring the cosmic order, by linking their own governmental hierarchy to the cosmic hierarchy of greater and lesser gods, the various levels of heaven, and the like. And the king himself, at

least in those fabulous, early days of the Satria domination in Bali, was claimed to be no less than an avatar of Vishnu himself. Ideological claims to status in Bali have always been fundamentally a matter of descent from divine forebears - and this includes the Satria, who claimed the prerogatives of secular power.

But status can be eroded. Geertz (1980:17) has Kapakisan as a Brahmana, a member of the priestly *kasta*, before he moved to Bali to commence his rule there. In the Babad Dalem, Kapakisan's grandfather had a Brahmana title, but his father's title is only "Sri", whereas his own is "Dalem", a secular, ruler's (Satria) title. In Geertz's version (ibid), Kapakisan was "lowered a notch to Satria status" when he took up his secular position. His divine origins, however, remain. The matter of status mobility, paradoxical in view of the allegedly hereditary nature of status, and always a vexed issue in Bali (Boon, 1977:166-167; Howe, 1995), will be further discussed below.

The fact that the Satria depend ultimately for their status, at the ideological level, on their claimed descent from divinity and from Brahmana ancestors, only reinforces the ideological position of the latter as holders of supreme hereditary charisma. Historically, in India itself and in Indianised Java, the Brahmana have been court ritual specialists and confidants of kings - in Bali, since well before Kapakisan's arrival (A. Hobart et al, 1996:25).

Brahmana claims to pre-eminent status are based firstly on the creation myth in the enormously authoritative (for Hindus both Indian and Balinese) Rig Veda, wherein the Brahmana issued from the mouth of Brahma, the supreme Godhead. Other named groups (*varna*) issued from other body parts of Brahma - these groups are the main "castes" of Indian society (ignoring here the great complexity of the sub-castes), and by historical derivation the *kasta* (Triwangsa) title-groups plus the Sudra "commoner" population of Bali. Hence the Satria issued from the shoulders and/or the arms of God, and the Wesia (using Balinese spellings) from the thighs and/or the stomach.

The three *kasta* (the term excludes the commoner majority in Bali) are collectively the Triwangsa, meaning the three groups who are entitled to undergo the Hindu ceremony of the second birth (*dwijati*), as mentioned in the Introduction. This prerogative is denied the fourth and final grouping of humanity, which issued from the soles of God's feet. This group, the majority of humanity, are the Sudra; according to the scriptures, their lot in life is to serve the twice-born Triwangsa. Of the latter, the Brahmana, born of the mouth of God, have the life-duty (*dharma*) of the religious intellectual, that is, to study the texts and conduct ritual. The Satria *dharma* is to govern and protect creation. The Wesia are fitted to be merchants, farmers, artisans and the like (Wiana and Santeri, 1993:26-27).

The Sudra in Bali today, about 90% of the population, are more commonly known as *anak jaba* ("people outside", i.e. outside the royal residences and priestly houses) or simply *anak Bali* (a Balinese), often said with a wry smile - as if to say, "I'm a Balinese, just a Balinese like any other; why bother with all this status hierarchy business?" At any rate, that is how I interpret such responses (often heard from Sudra people, when I broached the matter of social status in conversation).

It is of course not surprising that people who are disadvantaged by their social position at the bottom of the status hierarchy should seek to downplay the importance of such hierarchy in social life. But I also met many Sudra people who seemed quite proud to be associated in some formal way with the Triwangsa, usually through menial labour, or perhaps as members of the gamelan orchestra of the local prince's residence (*puri*), or again as general retainers (*parekan*) in such a residence or in the houseyard of a Brahmana family (*gria*).

To dismiss such attitudes outright as false consciousness would be to fail to grasp that these people were getting something out of the relationship. The economic reality is that high-*kasta* residences (or at least, some of them) are relatively wealthy, and association with these Satria *puri* and Brahmana *gria* can provide reasonable employment for otherwise indigent local Sudra men or women. I have no doubt too that at least some Sudra informants were genuine in their admiration for particular high-*kasta* patrons and more or less willingly subscribed to the *kasta* ideology by which they were accorded a low status position - but at least, a majority one.

The point to be made here, however, is that the Triwangsa have a strong claim to a divine underpinning of their status claims, based on venerable Hindu scriptural authority - which so far as I know is not seriously challenged by any groups in Bali. Ironically enough, attempts over the years to undermine *kasta* in Bali, by pointing to the "division of labour" aspect of the Hindu creation myth, tend to reinforce rather than dismantle Triwangsa status. By "division of labour" here I mean the doctrine of *dharma*, whereby each of the groups born from the body of God has a specific life-duty to fulfil, as mentioned above. The critique of according differential status to the various *dharma*s focuses on the interdependence of the various groups, as spelled out in the myth - each group needs the others, to survive and prosper in life. Without the Wesia to grow the food, the Brahmana (and the others) would perish; without the Satria to govern and protect, with force if necessary, chaos and conquest by strangers would prevail; without the Brahmana to conduct the vital ritual, humanity could not maintain proper relations with the cosmos.

On the face of it, this is not a doctrine of inequality¹⁵; but a closer look shows that the myth implies inequality in at least two ways, to Balinese as well as Indian Hindus. The first way is through the choice of body parts (of God) from which the four groups

emerge. Balinese conceptions of relative cleanliness or purity have the general orientation that the head is purest, the feet least pure. One should avoid exposing or pointing the soles of the feet at anyone, for example while sitting. More generally, high is holy, low profane; this is amply demonstrated in the literature on Bali (e.g. Guernonprez, 1990:71). It becomes difficult then for scripture-oriented critics of *kasta* status, such as Wiana and Santeri (1993), to deny the superior status of a group whose origin is the mouth of God, vis-à-vis the other groups who emerged, also from the body of God, but, as it were, from "lower down". The Sudra are obviously, in this schema, particularly status-disadvantaged (remembering that they issued from the soles of God's feet).

The origin myth also implies inequality between the groups of humanity in the order in which they emerged from the Godhead. The order of appearance is always given as Brahmana, Satria, Wesia, and finally Sudra. Insofar as temporal precedence is evaluated positively by Balinese, this too helps to impose a status hierarchy among these groups. The positive evaluation of precedence in time is easily demonstrated by, for example, the coding in language of the elder sibling-younger sibling distinction (*beli/mbok* for older sibling - respectful connotations; versus *adi* for younger sibling - affectionate connotations).

The same principle is at work when families travel, sometimes great distances, to worship at shrines (*kawitan*) located where long-departed ancestors once lived. Such shrines may in fact be rather run-down, compared to better-maintained (but ritually junior) houseyard shrines of living descendants. The older shrines are ritually senior and, as such, draw lineage members from far afield (for example, from far-away Jakarta, or overseas) on the occasions of annual *kawitan* ritual. One's ancient ancestors are as the gods themselves, and must be given due homage; and (to add what I think is also a Balinese sentiment), anyway, it's nice to keep in touch - with one's ancestors, of course, but also with one's distant relatives. The houseyard shrine is fine for daily and cyclical rites of "keeping in touch", but my impression is that pious visits to the *kawitan* are like doing business directly with head office, so to speak, rather than a branch office. The origin shrine, whether in good repair or not, has an aura of venerable antiquity and spirituality about it, engendered by the annual visits of deified ancestors who long preceded their living descendants on earth, and now inhabit the higher levels of the unseen, *niskala* realm.

Calls for the abolition of status distinctions between the four groupings of humanity, such as Wiana and Santeri (op. cit.), point to the absence of the term *kasta*, with its hierarchical connotations, in the sacred texts. The four groupings are there termed *warna* (originally, "colour"), and the scriptural expression *catur warna*, "the four colours", has been much used in anti-*kasta* polemics, letters to the editor of the Bali Post, and so on, in recent years. *Kasta* is claimed to be a civil matter, a system of ranked, hereditary titles

bestowed by early kings of Bali upon loyal subjects for services rendered (Wiana and Santeri, 1993:32). These critics tend to gloss over the close fit between the “four colours” and the *kasta* model, as outlined above. By denying a connection between the scriptural “colour” groupings and the extant *kasta* groups, allegedly¹⁶ egalitarian critics are really seeking to strip the hierarchical status aspect from an agreed, religiously-sanctioned social division of humanity. It would help their case if the four “colours” did not happen to be called Brahmana, Satria, Wesia, and Sudra, and were assigned respective *dharma* roles that did not lend themselves so well to cultural interpretation as being in a hierarchy of status.

So, cultural elements of discrimination and differential evaluation conspire to make of the Hindu creation myth, to the extent that it retains its authority in Hindu-Balinese society, a blueprint for an effective social inequality. It is quite comprehensive, too, for the original ancestors of all humanity were allegedly produced in this way, from one or another part of the body of Brahma. Hereditary transmission of this primeval status is reinforced ideologically by the principle of *dharma*, whereby each of the major groupings of humanity have specified roles in the social division of labour and members of each group are born with the predetermined aptitude or propensity (BI: *bakat kelahiran*) to fulfil that *dharma* (Wiana and Santeri, 1993:32). Hereditary status is also reinforced culturally (in India and in Bali) by the principle of group endogamy, in particular by the prohibition against hypogamous marriages¹⁷.

Non-hierarchical Status Claimants

In general throughout this thesis, when I mention “status” and “status-groups”, I refer to the generalised community standing or social honour (to borrow from Weber) claimed by and accorded to the Triwangsa/*kasta* groups and based on the ideological claims to hereditary charisma made by those groups. I call the *kasta* groups “status-groups”. I acknowledge that there are low-*kasta* groups that also claim hereditary charisma with various ideological justifications - these groups I refer to as “title-groups”, to distinguish them collectively from the *kasta* status-groups. Finally, I acknowledge two Bali-wide classes of practitioners (*pemangku* temple priests and *balian* spirit mediums and healers) whose members are also claimants to status based on ideological/religious grounds, but who are not members of established groups with a hereditary basis of recruitment. These categories are discussed below.

Sudra title-groups

It would be a mistake to conclude that all "traditional" status in Bali has been monopolised by the Triwangsa/*kasta* groups just discussed. I referred above, in passing, to Sudra groups who claim a group status based on criteria other than membership of the Triwangsa. The Sudra form, in the *kasta* model, a low-status majority group (sometimes referred to in the literature, as I have above, as "commoners") which is clearly differentiated from the elite Triwangsa. This differentiation is perpetuated through heredity and effected ritually by the exclusion of Sudra from the "second birth", as mentioned above, and also marked linguistically by the norms of speech register usage, by which status inferiors should use "high language" to superiors, who in turn "talk down" to inferiors, using coarser forms of the language (Clynes, 1989).

While evidently more or less conforming, historically speaking (and in my experience in Bali), to such conventional acknowledgments of status inequality, some organised Sudra groups have been very active in asserting their own claims to respect and status, both generally as special groups within Balinese society, and particularly in contradistinction to the Triwangsa. Boon called these groups "augmented Sudra" (1977:159).

The best known of these Sudra title-groups are the Pasek and the Pande. Both groups claim pre-Majapahit origins in Bali, and have several named subsidiary clans with variations on the genealogical theme of descent from divinity. An exception is the Pasek Kayu Selelem (Blackwood Pasek), who have the animist tradition of descent from that type of tree. More commonly amongst the Pasek clans, descent from early Brahmanic priests, titled *empu*, is claimed (Boon, 1977:171-172; various versions of the Babad Pasek, e.g. 1956, 1991). Somehow, over the centuries of the present millennium, the Pasek have lost their "original" high (*kasta*) status as Brahmins, i.e. as people descended from the Indian Brahmanic missionaries and court priests who came to Java and Bali before the Majapahit occupation. This irks many Pasek today, some of whom support an island-wide movement under the rubric of Maha Gotra Pasek Sanak Sapta Resi (The Pasek Community, Descendants of the Seven Priests). The seven priests (*resi*) were the offspring of the Brahmin Empu Gde Jaya, and themselves became ancestors to all of the Warga Pasek, the Pasek Clan (Babad Pasek, 1991).

For their part, present-day Brahmana will point with satisfaction to the fact that most Pasek base their ultimate claims to status on descent from Brahmanic forebears, which of course helps to legitimate current Brahmana status. The Pasek may have been "demoted" in historical times by the fiat of this *raja* or that, annoyed at some Pasek misdemeanour.

This is a common theme in the history of status in Bali. In more recent times, this group has sought to level the status playing field, as indicated above, by alleging that Triwangsa/*kasta* elitism is an unjustified corruption imposed upon a Vedic egalitarianism, in Bali at the advent of the Majapahit rule, for the benefit of certain groups (those which retained the *kasta* titles). At the same time, Pasek intellectuals, who are in my view clearly engaged in what Geertz called the "unending rivalry of prestige" in Bali (1980:120), assert the special status of their group - partly on the basis of a certain civil authority granted in historical times to Pasek and Bendesa¹⁸ groups, but largely on the familiar basis of divine ancestry.

It seems to me that the organised Pasek have been trying to finesse their status claims by the two-part strategy of, firstly, denying the legitimacy of the hierarchical *kasta* model, but then, secondly, affiliating via historical connections with the extant Brahmana and claiming high status as *primus inter pares* - obviously a delicate manoeuvre for an avowedly egalitarian movement. I can report, in this context, that a Pasek friend of mine, active in the Warga Pasek, once let slip the epithet "the new elite of Pasek" (I Gde Pitana, pers. comm.). It seems that Geertz was right about the salience of group status for many Balinese.

The touchstone of dissent from Triwangsa status is the refusal by groups to employ Brahmana high priests or *pedanda* to officiate at ritual organised by group members or to use the allegedly uniquely potent holy water (*tirtha*) prepared by *pedanda*. The proper conduct of ritual - especially for the deceased, who will remain unpurified ghosts haunting their previous abode unless duly released with appropriate rites - is a preoccupation of most Balinese. Given the near-hegemony of the Brahmana *pedanda* over this aspect of religious life¹⁹, it takes considerable courage and/or conviction by non-Triwangsa dissenting groups to employ their own priests (*empu*) in these major rites. Some Pasek do so, using one of the few living *empu* available; however, many other Pasek still use *pedanda*, including the local branch of the Pasek Pulosari in Sepenan.

Dissenting Pasek and other non-*kasta* title-groups are currently seeking to equate their own high priests with Brahmana *pedanda*, relying on a determination by the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia²⁰ to the effect that all groups can have their own "high priests" undergo the second birth (*dwijati*) ceremony and become what they call *sulinggih* (a status-neutral term meaning a human vehicle/seat for the divine). On this interpretation, one group's high priest is as good as another's; in particular, Brahmana *pedanda* lose their traditional hegemony over important ritual duties.

I found no support for this challenge to the *dharma* basis of Brahmana status in Sepenan. Considering the unusually great representation of Brahmana in the village, especially in Sepenan Kaja, where I stayed, this was less surprising than it would have

been in areas of low Triwangsa population. The local Pasek Pulosari were content to continue to use the ritual services of a *pedanda*, rather than switching to a Pasek *empu*. The latter would have had to have been sought from far afield, and such a major switch would have involved a disturbance to local politics in the broad sense, something which the local Pasek were at that time unwilling to do.

Another important Sudra title-group, the Pande, have long been famous dissenters from Brahmana ritual authority. The definitive modern study of the Pande is by Guernonprez (1987), some of whose informants lived in Sepenan. The Pande base their group status on their possession of the hereditary charisma of the exclusive practitioners of the magically-dangerous occupation of metal-working (Goris, 1984a:291). Goris also gives (p.298-9) a summary of a Pande origin legend, from a *lontar*²¹ text preserved by the group, which exalts the Hindu God Brahma as the god of fire - a Pande emblem. From Brahma arose Empu Pradah, progenitor of all the Pande in their several clans: Pande Besi (blacksmiths), Pande Mas (goldsmiths), and so on. This *lontar* stresses the magical power (*sakti*) inherent in the basic Pande ritual *mantra*²², and also emphasises the ancient ancestry of the group, which pre-dates the rise of the Brahmana in Bali. Because of this, according to the *lontar*, Pande may not follow Brahmana ritual nor accept holy water (*tirtha*) from that group. Some Pande go so far as to aver that Brahmanic *tirtha* will burn their skin, or make them sick.

This *lontar* has been the basis or justification²³ for centuries-old Pande dissent from the *kasta* system and Triwangsa privilege. Guernonprez describes the resistance of this group to the Dutch imposition of taxes and demands for corvee labour, in the early period of colonial power in South Bali (1987:141-5). Several leading Pande from another village in Gianyar (Beng) suffered banishment, in the years 1910-1913, for their obdurate stand against official inclusion and group anonymity among the Sudra. Such lumping-together of non-Triwangsa was a feature of the Dutch colonial "freezing of caste", as Vickers puts it (1989:146), for the purpose of simplifying administrative-legal structures. The Pande objected to this because their group status would suffer, and moreover they would be liable to taxation and corvee burdens, along with the rest of the Sudra.

The basis of Pande group status is, indeed, qualitatively close to the *dharma* aspect of Triwangsa status, with its emphasis on hereditary fitness for a magical-sacred occupation. A crucial pillar of Pande prestige is their refusal to employ *tirtha* prepared by Brahmana priests, as just noted, and to allow only their own priests (like those of the Pasek, called *empu*) to conduct the various life-cycle rites. In the colonial period, the Pande were granted official sanction by the Dutch-controlled court of canon law (*Raad Kerta*) for this ritual separatism, after an initial refusal. However, as Guernonprez notes (1987:145), the right to prepare *tirtha* was extended to the Pande priests as a specific

dispensation by the *pedanda*, as instructors to the *empu* in the necessary preparatory ritual. The ritual seniority of the Brahmana priests was thus maintained in their own eyes while Pande group status was preserved through the "official" endorsement of the *Raad Kerta* for continued Pande ritual autonomy²⁴.

Nowadays, not so many Pande pursue the calling of metal smith, although members of this group still make gamelan instruments in the village (Tihingan) studied in 1958 by Geertz and Geertz (1959). In a later volume, Geertz and Geertz (1975:38) describe the title-group solidarity of Pande in Tihingan, who tended to employ other Pande where possible in their foundries and gong-making workshops. Such group solidarity will emerge in following chapters as a feature of status-groups in Sepenan. I did not get to know any Pande well in Sepenan, as they were concentrated in the southernmost two *banjar*, while I lived in the northernmost *banjar*. Sepenan informants agreed with the suggestion in Guernonprez (1987) that Pande people still tended to affirm group status strongly, taking satisfaction for example from the tradition that even Brahmana *pedanda* priests should use the high language (otherwise unheard of, to commoners) when addressing a Pande who is holding the tools of his trade in his hands. I was told that the Pande families in Sepenan used to use a *pedanda* for their rituals, but had started to use holy water made by one of their own ritual specialists (*empu*) who lived in Denpasar. They reportedly were not in the *fanatik* category (of Pande title-group activists), but had agreed to go along, at least to that extent, with the recent resurgence of non-Triwangsa title-group assertiveness in Bali.

Apart from the various named clans of the Pasek and Pande, there is in Bali no shortage of other, but lesser-known, Sudra title-groups, all claiming some degree of hereditary charisma based on some sort of distinction (often, descent from *kasta* ancestors) in the distant past. In Sepenan I found members of the Ngakan, Manikan and Pering clans, in addition to Pasek Pulosari, Pasek Kayu Selem, Pasek Gelgel, and the Pande people just mentioned. Howe (1995:10) wrote about a Ngakan group in another village in Gianyar regency; he reported on what seems to be a "status drive" by this Ngakan group, a kind of "reduced"²⁵ Satria, who had begun to style themselves Dewa (a higher Satria title). This had caused much resentment and a revision by other title-groups of their own preferred terms of address, in order to retain a higher position on the status ladder in their area. In fact, the Ngakan in Sepenan were attempting to augment their status in a similar manner, also using the tactic of affecting higher titles (Dewa/Desak), with mixed results²⁶.

Pemangku temple priests

Mention must be made also of the ubiquitous temple priests (*pemangku*), who are associated with a particular village temple²⁷, and perform most everyday ritual there and at people's homes. These priests are usually Sudra, although I met one Satria '*mangku* in Sukawati, and have even heard of a Brahmana choosing this occupation - but I could not confirm this. Theirs is the status of office, by and large - but, as always in Bali, a reputation for being *sakti*, and perhaps dabbling in forbidden lore, can easily enhance the general social standing (if not the position in the *kasta* hierarchy, which is theoretically a matter of heredity) of notable *pemangku*. The '*mangku dalem* (as he was universally known), the temple priest of the *pura dalem* or death temple in Sepenan, was a case in point. He was a very charismatic figure in the village, due to his long and distinguished service in both civil and, more recently, religious life. He had been *klian* (in later years, *klian dinas*) of the settlement from 1952 to 1981 (an extraordinarily long term) before Sepenan became an official *dinas* village, in 1989. He had also been a *balian* healer of some reputation. In recent years his reputation as a *sakti* personality had grown.

Such priests, even when they have personal reputations for spiritual potency - not automatically associated with the occupation of *pemangku* - generally constitute no threat to the *kasta* status of Brahmana *pedanda* high priests. They are "ordained" by the latter, and qualified to officiate at ritual where the *pedanda*'s special knowledge and competence as vehicle of the divinity is not required. In Sepenan, the *pemangku dalem* was kept busy with minor purificatory rites (for new buildings, at the sites of traffic accidents, etc) and at certain phases of the life cycle rituals of village families. More significantly, he officiated at important chthonian/animist rites, such as the "awakening" of the village *barong* deity, described in Chapter Five.

I would hesitate to characterise his expertise and undoubtedly high standing in the community as that of a "peasant intellectual" (cf. Connor, 1982, mentioned above) whose prestige might have rivalled the status derived from the *pedanda*'s ascribed supremacy in the religious field. Rather, his role complemented the Brahmana priest's - or, more exactly, different ritual contexts called for the services of one or the other sort of practitioner.

Informants were quite clear on this. The very few members of the community who denied the necessity of *pedanda* officiation and holy water at all (that is, the five families of the Pande low-*kasta* title-group living in Sepenan Kaja) turned instead to their own versions (*empu*) of the Brahmana *pedanda* - not to the "people's priest" or *pemangku*. The majority used *pedanda* for their major life cycle ritual, and *pedanda* officiation was considered vital at key stages of certain village temple ritual, as described below. However,

the *pemangku*'s officiation was also considered vital at certain other kinds of ritual, some of which was also conducted at village temples (Chapter Five).

The essential difference in the two types of contexts was in effect the difference between the "high" Hindu-Bali religion and the still-significant aspects of its predecessor cosmology - the animistic side, with its emphasis on malevolent *buta* and *kala* spirits. The need to placate these on a regular basis implied the need for a ritual specialist skilled in the various mantras and paraphernalia appropriate to the task - that is, a priest. However, association with such spiritual "low-life" as the *buta* and *kala* was deemed to be polluting for *pedanda* high priests, and the task has been left in Bali to the *pemangku* (Goris, 1960:98-99).

I watched the *pemangku dalem* many times when he was performing rites in various locations in the village. He always sat crossed-legged on a mat on the ground on these occasions - in contrast to the officiation of the *pedanda* priests, who always sat in some elevated position (either on raised, roofed platforms in shrine compounds or on similar temporary structures erected in the houseyards where ceremonies were being held). The status implications of the relative positions (one high, the other low) adopted by the two types of religious practitioner are clear enough, in a cultural milieu that indeed does link relative godliness/purity with relative height (see following Chapter).

We should not however underestimate the importance to the village of the services rendered by the low-*kasta* *pemangku*. His own explanation as to why he always sat on the ground was that the low position was a reflection of the low status of the demonic forces that he was dealing with. He pointed out that offerings (*caru*) to demons are always placed or poured on the ground. Sitting on the ground when conducting demon-oriented ritual was simply part of keeping the demons "in their place" in the overall cosmological scheme of things (cf. Lansing, 1983). His *kasta* status - basically a matter of birth - was in his view an unrelated matter.

From a *kasta* perspective, of course, it was not unrelated. The great majority of *pemangku* are low-*kasta* people (mostly but not exclusively men). While high-*kasta* people can and occasionally do become ordained (*mewinten*) as *pemangku*, a low-*kasta* person cannot become a *pedanda* high priest. Nor will *pedanda* involve themselves ritually with the demonic forces - a polluting influence.

There even exists a Sudra title-group with the title *Sengguhu*, which has traditionally supplied what Boon (1990:63) calls "the high priests of the left-hand powers" - clerics specialising in placating or exorcising the demonic forces. Such priests routinely officiate with (but seated at a lower level than) *pedanda* at important rites, particularly those of pan-Bali significance (Hooykaas, 1976:6). There were no *Sengguhu* living at Sepenan, but I

met two members of this title-group in Denpasar; they were in charge of building my wife's house there. As some members of the Pande and Pasek title-groups also do, they used a group-specific forename (in this case, "Guru") to mark their group affiliation.

There was one other *pemangku* in Sepenan, attached to the combined *pura puseh/pura desa* village temple located in Sepenan Tengah. Both performed the kind of purificatory ritual described above and, given the perceived necessity to include such purification at virtually every life cycle and village community ritual occasion, they had a busy schedule. As occupants of a special position in the religious life of the community, they enjoyed a certain charisma of office (as Weber would say). In the case of the *pemangku dalem*, there was also a large component of personal charisma, due to his personality and past achievements as both a *balian* spirit medium and (by all accounts) a popular and successful secular leader.

Both of these temple priests, however, were low-*kasta* by birth; as such, they could not claim the hereditary charisma of the Triwangsa *kasta* elite. In fact, their professional preoccupation with forces from the nether regions of the unseen realm (*niskala*) rather reinforced the hierarchical *kasta* world-view; they dealt with the lower/impure forces, while the priests of the Brahmana elite dealt ritually with the gods, the highest and purest of beings.

Balian spirit mediums and healers

I referred above to Connor's (1982) thesis about Balinese spirit mediums (*balian*) as "peasant intellectuals", whose knowledge of esoteric ritual and ability to act as conduits for the speech of deified ancestors in her view made them rivals of the Brahmana elite and their *pedanda* high priests.

These practitioners would seem better placed as potential ideological rivals of the *kasta* religious elite than the *pemangku* temple priests just discussed. Unlike the latter, the *balian* do deal with higher/purer entities, notably when conducting seances to contact (typically) spirits of the recently deceased or other ancestors. This class of practitioner however also has a general reputation for being likely to deal also with demonic forces, in the pursuit of the acquisition of supernatural powers (Covarrubias, 1972 (1937):349ff). This reputation militates against any claims that *balian* might have to general acceptance as practitioners of the "high" religion - regardless of how *sakti* they may be.

As it happened, the only people known as *balian* in Sepenan were the *pemangku dalem* and a Brahmana man, Gus Agung Sudira - a prominent figure in following Chapters, for reasons other than his prowess as a *balian*. Both men were semi-retired from their *balian* activities by the time I arrived in the village, but both had reputations as effective communicators with the spirit world.

Another kind of *balian* lived in a neighbouring village: a *balian tulang* ("bone healer"), reputed to be able to set and promote quick healing of broken bones, through a combination of anatomical and esoteric knowledge. I had occasion to watch this man in action when a young man from a neighbouring houseyard in Sepenan broke his collarbone.

The patient was taken to see the *balian*, with an escort of perhaps a dozen Sepenan men crammed into my minibus. The delegation made a very formal entrance at the *balian's* home, with a spokesman (the *klian adat* or head of customary affairs of the *banjar*) beseeching the assistance of the *balian* in a high language register. The *balian's* assistant replied in equally formal language, confirming the origins of our party and our bona fides, before ascertaining the nature of the patient's injury.

The *balian* himself - a man of perhaps fifty years - then appeared and proceeded to treat the young man, with rubbing of oil and considerable manipulation of the patient's arms. All the while, he mumbled something inaudibly, which those watching doubtless took to be the potent incantations of his craft. The patient did seem to be greatly relieved during and after this treatment. The *balian's* assistant accepted a gift resembling temple offerings of various fruits and some cloth, with a 10,000 rupiah note included. There was a definite religious aura about the consultation, and the *balian* himself was treated with the greatest respect by the Sepenan contingent.

I also visited on two occasions with the *balian* medium (*balian taksu*) who was the subject of Connor's thesis (1982) and subsequent film (1986). This woman, known as Jero Tapakan, lived in a Bangli village and was a full-time *balian* of considerable reputation. I refer to two seances with this *balian* in a later Chapter.

These practitioners as a class do enjoy community standing as possessors of arcane knowledge and as being to a lesser or greater extent *sakti* personages - depending on demonstrated performance. In this respect, along with the *pemangku* temple priests, they certainly constitute some counterbalance to domination of the priestly function otherwise exercised by the Brahmana *pedanda* "high priests".

Discussion: Status and Factionalism

The above categories of people with status claims differ in one fundamental aspect: whether their status is fundamentally a personal or a group attribute. The (usually low-*kasta*) temple priests and spirit mediums may have great reputations as *sakti* practitioners, to be held in awe or revered as holy men or women. However, their status derives from a combination of the charisma of the "office" they fill and the degree of *sakti* spiritual potential that they bring to that office.

These practitioners are not members of named, hereditary groups that claim a permanent status for the whole group - as both the *kasta* status-groups and the low-*kasta* title-groups do. Hence, the potential for such individual practitioners to become involved in status-based factional activity within their communities is negligible.

On the other hand, where ideologically-based status groups are part of a settlement community, the potential for factional divisions is very real. This is especially so where the group of reference has a pan-Bali distribution, transcending the village of residence of group members - as both the Triwangsa/*kasta* status-groups and the low-*kasta* (Sudra) title-groups certainly do. Where the "common good" becomes identified more with status-group or title-group solidarity than with solidarity with the settlement community itself, tension arises. In Bali, the hierarchical ideological basis of the *kasta* status-groups, in particular, is fundamentally opposed to the egalitarian ideological basis of community solidarity, to which villagers of all status rankings are expected to subscribe.

My perceptions of how this fundamental ideological incompatibility was played out during my stay at the fieldwork location will form the body of this thesis, from Chapter Three onwards. Before that, Chapter Two will explore further the hierarchical ideology used to justify *kasta* status, notably the concept of relative purity, which has widespread acceptance. The concept of core values - such as purity, but also others, such as the sacredness of settlement unity/solidarity - is examined, with a view to illuminating the ideological aspects informing both status elitism and factionalism, on one hand, and an egalitarian community solidarity, on the other.

Notes

¹ There is no separate ritual marking of this "second birth" for Triwangsa members generally, but it is a part of the ordination of Brahmana *pedanda* high priests. Other Triwangsa members can request the rite for their personal spiritual benefit. The point is that the rite (*medwijati*) is not available to "commoners" (non-Triwangsa) (Ida Pedanda Gria Kemenuh, pers. comm.) Rubinstein (1991:45, footnote 8), following Korn (1960), indicates that the second birth is reserved for *pedanda* only.

² Although, in "feudal", pre-colonial times, low-status Balinese were referred to as *kawula* (not slaves, but "owned" by locally-resident traditional overlords) subject to arbitrary punishment, abduction of young women as concubines, compulsory military service, debtor and convict slavery, and other such treatment by their lords (Schulte Nordholt, 1996:42) - which is certainly reminiscent of the historical treatment of Indian "untouchables" by their caste superiors. Nevertheless, the Sudra are ideologically within the *kasta* universe, not outside it, in Bali as in India.

³ In my view there are too many differences from the Indian model to retain the use of the term "caste" in the Balinese case. Bali has no "untouchables"; there is no comprehensive association between *kasta* sub-groups and particular occupations (a key aspect of Indian caste); and commensality and endogamy rules, while present, are less strict and more generalised than in India.

⁴ From the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen", French Revolution, 1789

⁵ Swellengrebel (1984:32) considers the *banjar* an "indigenous" institution; that is, pre-dating Hindu-Javanese influence.

⁶ There are however some Muslim Balinese communities in the northeast of the island (Barth, 1993), although their descent from Bugis or other non-Balinese stock makes their Balinese identity problematic - given the emphasis in Bali on the derivation of one's identity from one's ancestors (literally - via reincarnation).

⁷ The "indigenous" Balinese settlements located mainly in the Batur volcano/lake area, and north and northeast thereof; supposedly demonstrating a pre-Hindu/Java culture, without *kasta* status-groups (Grader, 1984:189-191). The likelihood of the continuous isolation of these "original Balinese" from royal courts and Indic influence is rejected on archaeological grounds by A. Hobart et al (1996:26-27). These villages possess dualistic patterns of social organisation, thought to represent an older, Austronesian pattern, along with seniority-based status ranks and also hereditary status groups (of an indigenous, not *kasta* nature) (Korn, 1984:330-333).

⁸ cf. Boon (1977:18, 69).

⁹ In *Negara*, C. Geertz gives the example of the legendary founder of the Majapahit dynasty in Bali, Kresna Kepakisan, whose "heir proved to be insane (he married his sister to a horse) and had to be deposed in favor of a younger brother, who was only dissolute" (1980:14). Whether the dissolute brother was subsequently deposed also is not stated - but the flexibility of the "rules" is well conveyed.

¹⁰ My wife has a sister-in-law who has such a title (*mekel*), inherited from the same ancestral group studied by Boon (1977) in Tabanan.

¹¹ In an early account of *mana* in Melanesian contexts, Codrington observes that "all conspicuous success is a proof that a man has *mana*" (1891:120) - reminiscent of a Weberian *Protestant Ethic* predetermination that is however not so pronounced in Bali. The issue of attracting and holding the loyalty of followers/clients will arise below, in discussion of a local variant of the "big man" at my fieldwork village.

¹² See Wikan (1990) for a perhaps slightly melodramatic view of the Balinese preoccupation with fear of witchcraft.

¹³ I visited this *balian* on several occasions and participated in two seances with her. One was an attempt to contact my wife's recently deceased uncle; the object of the second seance was to contact my own late mother's spirit, the feasibility of which I neither believed in nor disbelieved. Judging from the accuracy of the spirit world responses "channelled" through Jero Tapakan, the *balian*, neither myself nor the deceased uncle's relatives were very impressed with the medium's abilities. Balinese belief in the phenomenon of obtaining guidance from the spirit world via *balian* seems remarkably resistant to erosion, considering the frequent failure of these practitioners to provide convincing interactions with the afterworld.

¹⁴ A. Hobart et al (1996:24) summarises the historical evidence for the existence of Balinese kingdoms from at least the ninth century AD.

¹⁵ Bêteille (1983:19) notes the irony of the "radical egalitarian", Gandhi, endorsing the *varna* ideology as a universal law organising human society in co-operative, interdependent groups, from which "feelings of superiority and inferiority" should be entirely absent. Apart from the more local inherent tendencies to attribute inequality to the *varna* scheme that I suggest below, Bêteille observes that Gandhi's disgust with the Indian caste system, as a "perversion of *varnadharma*" (ibid) (because it introduces a status hierarchy), overlooks the tendency to status distinctions which is inherent in "competition, individualism and the unlimited pursuit of material gain" (ibid). Bêteille's analysis is perhaps more appropriate for a frankly capitalist society, which in the liberal viewpoint will show up natural inequality (as in the unequal distribution of "talent", "diligence" etc) through the supposed "free and fair competition" of the marketplace. But the pursuit of material gain is certainly a relevant factor shaping Balinese society today - as will be very evident in following chapters.

¹⁶ Prominent Sudra critics of *kasta* decry the continuance of the "outmoded" status hierarchy in these modern times, yet occasionally slip up and reveal status ambitions for their own groups, some of which are highly organised and not at all lacking in group pride (e.g. some Pasek groups - see following chapters).

¹⁷ That is, Balinese women of Triwangsa status may not marry men from a lower *kasta*. This was formerly an offence punishable by death for both parties (Covarrubias, 1973(1937):47). This attitude has been much relaxed in the modern era in Bali, which is fortunate for my (Brahmana) wife and myself (a foreigner, i.e. by definition an *anak jaba*, outsider). Endogamy in Bali is more than a simple strategy of status preservation; see for example Geertz and Geertz (1975:94ff) and Boon (1977, Ch. 6) on *dadia* (corporate kin-group) marriage preferences and the ideological and pragmatic considerations that motivate them.

¹⁸ This is a similar Sudra title-group to the Pasek; both groups seem to have been hereditary providers of village heads in pre-Majapahit times (Goris, 1984:92-93). The Bendesa have nothing like the high profile of the Pasek in Bali today, although they presumably have similar claims to the sort of non-*kasta* status here discussed.

¹⁹ Brahmana high priests play a relatively small but key officiating role in standard Hindu-Bali life-cycle and public temple rituals; their participation is said to be necessary to "close" (*muwat*) the rites. There are however many lesser rituals for which a *pemangku* local temple priest - usually a low-*kasta* person - is sufficient.

²⁰ The official body charged with reform and standardisation of the Hindu religion in Indonesia; cf. Warren (1993:50), Vickers (1989:164).

²¹ Booklets comprising uniformly-trimmed palm-leaf sections, written on by inscribing characters with a sharp stylus, and rubbing black ink into the inscriptions. The Pande *lontar* in question is entitled *Prasasti Sira Pande Empu* (Goris, 1984a:298).

²² Goris (1984a:296) comments on this mantra or ritual incantation, allegedly very *sakti* and a key source of Pande status, or mystique, in scathing terms - "[t]he chief mantra . . . is definitely a new fabrication . . . [it] must be attributed to partial knowledge of the *mantra* books of the *pedandas*: the combination of letters in it cannot even be pronounced, let alone . . . have any lexical significance". This raises the issue of authenticity in such matters, which is however more practical than theoretical in nature for most Balinese (remembering Geertz's aphorism about the Balinese preference for orthopraxy over

orthodoxy). Documentary justification for one's group's status, such as this evidently "bogus" Pande *mantra*, and for that matter the dozens of relatively recently-produced *abad* genealogies/historical romances, comes down to what one can convince others to accept, as evidenced by their willingness to use the desired titles and form of language to members of one's group. Of course, nothing prevents opponents from using criticisms such as that of Goris to challenge claimed status (cf. Howe, 1995).

²³ See Miles (1981), who uses Balinese examples to illustrate the selective use and interpretation of so-called "classical tradition" to suit present-day political and status purposes of the groups involved.

²⁴ Such ceding of part of their hegemony over religious/intellectual expertise to another, moreover commoner group of course threatens that part of Brahmana hereditary charisma that depends on Brahmana *dharma* as ritual experts and peerless conduits for the Godhead. More recently, Balinese moves for religious rationalisation, in conformity with national government regulations for "official" religions, have seen the development of institutions to "officially" oversee the practice of religion in Bali (the *Parisada* Hindu Dharma Indonesia), and to teach, at tertiary level, Bali-Hindu orthodoxy, if not orthopraxy, notably the Universitas Hindu in Denpasar. This institution, privately run, produces teachers of religion who work in high schools, the secular universities, etc. This is obviously a further threat to Brahmana "ownership" of such knowledge. However, on the orthopraxy side of ritual, Brahmana *pedanda* high priests still guard much knowledge on the detail of mumbled (hence inaudible) *mantra* incantations, esoteric *mudra* hand movements, and so on.

²⁵ Geertz and Geertz (1975:124ff) refer to a principle of "sinking status" said to be characteristic of the relative internal status amongst the Triwangsa. On this analysis, taking for example the Satria, the status of the reigning king or *raja* is maximal (for Satria). The king's brothers are next highest in the hierarchy, as closest to the centre of power and pinnacle of status. The children of the brothers of the previous king (father of the present king, himself usually deceased, of course), who are patricousins (*misan*) of the reigning king's brothers, now have a lower relative status (but retain their titles) because they are now a generation removed from that closest proximity to the "centre" now enjoyed by the present king's brothers. Second patricousins (*mindon*), being grandchildren of brothers of the present king's grandfather, are relatively lower in status again (and in practice are often established in other villages peripheral to the present centre of power - generally keeping their Satria titles but having less and less influence as the generations pass - hence the "sinking status"). I often heard that such-and-such a group of people using a lesser Satria title once had higher status, with a title to match, but "lost" status by various mechanisms, all of which contradicts the principle of strict heredity. Some groups were allegedly "demoted" by petulant kings. In many cases, there is a suggestion of the "dilution" of royal blood, when kings and princes had children by commoner wives and concubines (and extramural liaisons resulting in acknowledged offspring, termed *astra*). The Ngakan discussed here are "usually . . . described as the descendants of a liaison between a *raja* and a woman of dubious origins (often a *jaba*)" (Howe, 1995:12). There does seem also, at least in some parts, to have been a rule that prescribed status demotion for the offspring of three succeeding generations of Satria lines where the wife in all three generations was a commoner (*jaba*) (Vickers, 1989:51). This of course undermines strict patrilineal heredity as the sole determinant of the status of offspring.

²⁶ As Howe points out (1995:12-15), people prefer not to confront others about controversial matters such as these demands for recognition of a higher status, by using new and higher-status titles for the group in question; but villagers can and do use gossip and ridicule to undermine these status drives. They also stress the trouble that can arise when a newly-deceased person, who has adopted a higher-status title in his/her lifetime, is not recognised by his/her ancestors (because of the changed name, which always includes the title) and can be trapped as a ghost, haunting his/her old surroundings. But there are always some people who stand to profit through maintaining good relations with individuals and groups involved in status drives - for example, through patronage, employment opportunities, etc - and therefore will readily recognise the "new" status and its proffered justification. Others, with no pragmatic advantage to gain, and especially if they have a similar level of status of their own to defend, will fiercely resist such "social climbing". The ultimate symbolic stage upon which such intra-village quarrels are played out is the funeral rite; Howe (ibid) describes the playing-out of resentment when community members boisterously damage the funeral tower of a Ngakan villager whose family had furnished the tower (*bade*) with nine *meru* roofs (a high Satria privilege) instead of a more appropriate seven. Such funeral disruptions are a common way of showing community displeasure at the behaviour of now-deceased individuals or their families or clans (see also Warren, 1993:79ff; Mead and Bateson, 1942).

²⁷ In Bali, the typical village-as-ritual-unit, the *desa adat*, maintains a three-temple set of foundation temple (*pura puseh*), village council temple (*pura desa/pura bale agung*), and death temple (*pura dalem*);

there is usually a temple priest attached to each, who takes care of all the lesser ritual not requiring the more exalted services - as a *kasta* ideologue would put it - of a Brahmana *pedanda* high priest.

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Chapter Two. Hierarchical Interpretations of Status in Bali

This Chapter examines more closely the hierarchical ideology underpinning *kasta* status and justifying a world-view where social inequality is the norm - the opposite of the egalitarian ethos of community solidarity explored further in following Chapters. Some familiarity with *kasta* hierarchy ideology is useful for an understanding of the status pretensions of the Triwangsa/*kasta* elite. More crucial, however, is the issue of whether, and to what extent, the low-*kasta* Balinese majority also subscribe to any society-wide core value - such as the ideological purity postulated by Dumont for Indian Hindu society - that necessarily supports the status claims of the *kasta* elite.

Purity-pollution and the Question of Hierarchy in Bali

The holistic Dumontian view

Amazingly, Dumont never mentioned Bali in his famous *Homo Hierarchicus* (1980 (1970)), despite significant speculation on non-Indian societies, including a section entitled "Castes outside India?" (1980:215-6). I would have thought that an avowedly Hindu society, with an elite minority divided into hereditary groups called Brahmana, Satria and Wesia, and a "commoner" majority called the Sudra, would have qualified automatically for consideration under that heading. Nor, as far as I can see, have any of the commentators on Balinese society who refer to Dumontian hierarchy theory (see below) attempted to explain this omission.

The gist of Dumont's theory of caste is that Hindu Indian society has developed a systematic division into a ranked hierarchy of groups (the four major *varna* or castes, and the numerous sub-castes or *jati*) as a necessary outcome of an all-pervasive ideological concept (what Dumont calls a "cardinal value") of purity - fundamentally a religious purity but analogous to the relative purity of the various human occupations. The social hierarchy is engendered ideologically by reference to a totalising purity, which I take to be more or less synonymous with Godliness; the various *varna* super-groupings (with the familiar titles of Brahmin, Kshatrya, Vaishya, Shudra - plus the "Untouchables" who have no equivalent in Bali) derive their relative status, to put it rather simply, from the

degree to which each group falls short, vis-à-vis other groups, of the absolute purity represented by the Godhead. (The relativities here are determined by Vedic prescription, as mentioned previously - the four *varnas* issued from different parts of the body of God, anthropomorphically conceived. Hence the Brahmins, issuing from God's mouth, have highest status, followed in the order shown above by the other *varnas*, which issued from progressively less pure parts of God's body).

In Dumont's analysis, proximity to the divine is again the basic foundation of caste status, with emphasis on the more Godlike-less Godlike (i.e. more pure-less pure) relative nature of earthly occupations as the tangible indicator of group purity. No human group can partake of absolute purity, which is an attribute of God alone; hence all human groups are impure compared to God, but, to take the obvious example, non-Brahmins (we are still talking about Hindu India) are impure vis-à-vis Brahmins, who alone, according to the scriptures, have the right to perform the important rituals. Of the non-Brahmins (the rest of humanity), only the Kshatriya and Vaishya (whose namesakes in Bali comprise the remainder of the Triwangsa) also undergo the Hindu rites of second birth, and are therefore purer than those groups whose members are excluded from this privilege. This successive series of pure-impure (or better: purer-relatively less pure) dichotomies is what, in Dumont's view, produces the status hierarchy of Indian caste.

Taking a structuralist line ("[h]ere we have the good fortune to find ourselves faced with a world which is structural to a very high degree", 1980:40), Dumont asserts that the Indian caste groups derive their jealously-guarded ranking in the caste hierarchy by reference to the overall concept of purity and the "network of relations" (ibid) produced by the various attributes (occupations and practices) of the castes and sub-castes. For example, the "twice-born" groups are clearly purer (therefore of higher status) than the rest of humanity, the Shudra-plus-Untouchables, and this is reflected in the multifarious discriminatory rules and prohibitions on commensality, endogamy, occupation, contact, etc, for which Indian society is renowned.

But between, say, the Kshatriya and Vaishya - or even between sub-castes of one of these castes - how is relative status/purity established? Again, by reference to group *dharma*, at the caste level, or conventional practices which are acknowledged as more, or less, pure (basically, more or less God-like), at the intra-caste level, i.e. between sub-castes (*jati*) of the same caste (*varna*). Hence, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya castes may both arrange (but not perform) ritual; but of these two, the Kshatriya have a divine mandate (*dharma*) to have secular dominion over all creatures, whereas the Vaishya *dharma* is a more modest, farming-commercial one, oriented to the sustenance of humanity but not to dominion over it. And sub-castes of, say, the Vaishya, can again establish relative status ranking by reference to group practices which attract an evaluation of purity.

The classic example is the matter of meat-eating versus vegetarianism; the latter is a purer practice, not requiring the killing of an animal, and contributes to a higher status ranking vis-à-vis meat-eating groups. Dumont acknowledges however that groups of near-equal status sometimes complicate the hierarchy when rival groups have some purer and some less pure attributes than rival groups (e.g. group A3 are vegetarians while group A7 eat meat, but A3 will smoke the water pipe with a wider range of other groups than will A7, and so on)¹.

But the inevitable complications of the highly-elaborated Indian system of castes are insignificant ripples on the grand theoretical pond of Dumont's aggressively holistic, not to say totalising, conception of Indian caste society. At base, Dumont erects a theoretical edifice for Hindu Indian society in which a religious purity is the central organising value, and the organising (indeed, the structuring) of society consists in the automatic and inevitable "encompassment" of named groups and sub-groups by other groups, according to pure-impure distinctions by which the "pure" group, in any comparison, is hierarchically superior to the impure (which however may itself be "pure" vis-à-vis a different group).

As to the question of temporal power (scripturally given to the Kshatriya, as noted above), Dumont stresses, as logically he must, that "power should be absolutely inferior to status" (1980:74); that is, that earthly dominion is ideologically encompassed by the purity of the cosmically-oriented priesthood. Hence Boon's term, "the radical disjunction between status and power" (1977:149) - theoretically a feature of Indian society, but in practice attenuated by the pragmatic realities of force. The "radical disjunction" is simply another way of phrasing Dumont's "encompassment", the sociological phenomenon by which any two discrete social groups, considered within the framework of an all-pervasive ideology (here, of "purity"), allegedly polarise in popular thought into a pure and a (relatively/at this level) impure dichotomy.

In the case of the royal vis-à-vis the priestly group, the latter, by reason of their greater purity, are polarised ideologically into a status position which utterly supersedes ("encompasses") that of royalty and its mighty but still earthly concerns. This is Boon's "radical disjunction". Actually, Dumont hedges his bets on the ideal supremacy of the (purity-based) hierarchic model by resorting to the scriptural *varnas*, which do subordinate king to priest, but also "establish[] a solidarity between them which opposes them conjointly to the other social functions" (1980:75).

He retreats further still from Boon's "radical disjunction" when, in discussing the alleged "solidarity between the first two *varnas*", he allows that "power participates in purity" (ibid:88). A hint of divine kingship, after all? This is reminiscent of Geertz's

ambivalence, in *Negara*, where he asserts the pre-eminent cultural salience of a Balinese ideology of status and paradigmatic princely ceremonial ("Power served pomp, not pomp power" (1980:13)), but also admits that "No one remains dominant politically for very long who cannot in some way promise violence to recalcitrants, pry support from producers, . . ." (ibid:123). All of which seems to undermine Geertz's picture of an ideological, rather than political, dominance by Balinese elites of the last century.

Of course, there is always the reality of power and force to confront (or complement) whatever ideological basis there may be for a society's way of life - assuming that large groups of people can even agree on such an "ideological basis" at all. In his Preface to the second English edition of *Homo Hierarchicus*, Dumont responds to some of the criticisms of the original edition, including the "Gallic intemperate intellectualism" ascribed to him by one (unnamed) critic (1980:xxiii). There is not enough space here to do justice to this dialogue. Suffice to say, as Dumont himself does in summarising the objections of his critics, that "the main idea, the idea of hierarchy separated from power, is generally rejected" (ibid:xxxv).

This critical rejection is due, in Dumont's view, to a generalised (Western) underestimation of the salience of ideology in cultural life, in favour of an "essential preoccupation" with "property and its transmission", serving to "insure the victory of materialism over the conclusions of conscientious anthropological work" (ibid:xxviii). This is certainly a little intemperate; the implication is that materialist analyses are not based on the requisite "anthropological work" - or, if they are, that such work is not "conscientious". Hence, most foreign observers of Hindu Indian (i.e. caste) society are incapable, by dint of their alleged obsessions with materialism and a concomitant individualism, of appreciating how persons in caste society are readily subjugated to the idea of the greater whole, to the system of castes, through the ideology of relative purity, or, more precisely, "the pure-impure opposition as encompassing value" (Dumont, ibid:xxxix).

Dumont seems to regard most of the criticisms of *Homo Hierarchicus* as emanating from unreconstructed proto-Marxists, who dismiss hierarchical status as "hardly more than a fantasy, or at best an aspect of the social 'superstructure'" while privileging political and economic power as "a solid, universal, and 'infrastructural' given" (ibid:xviii). Be that as it may, the radical separation of status and power in the Dumontian analysis of caste society has been questioned among others by scholars who have investigated the Brahmin-Kshatrya relationship in the history of India. Raheja (1988) has reviewed the evidence for a historical close relationship between priest and king. She argues that this relationship is far from one based simply on a frank and ritually

unelaborated interdependence, whereby the king rules by power and force, but needs the priest to conduct the rites, the priest in turn depending on the king for material support.

Drawing on ethnography which focuses on the importance of inter-group prestations in social life (Marriott, 1976; Vatuk and Vatuk, 1976; Fuller, 1977; Parry, 1986), Raheja shows that a central-peripheral model, at least as well as an hierarchical model, can account for the "configuration of castes" (1988:512). In this alternative to Dumont's analysis, the dominant caste in the village is bound to all the other castes with which it has dealings via prescribed gifts (*dan*; cf Mauss' *don*). The dominant caste, generally Kshatrya - if not kings then at least reproducing the royal function at the village level - make ritual prestations at life-cycle ceremonies and in crisis situations to other caste groups. In so doing, they act as *ritual* (not merely military) protectors of the village. This is not to say that the Brahmins, if present, are not acknowledged as ritually superior from an hierarchical viewpoint; it is to add another dimension to caste, the dimension of "auspiciousness", akin to the charisma of royalty mentioned earlier, which is to a central-peripheral view of caste what purity is to an hierarchical view. As Raheja puts it:

In this interpretation of caste, hierarchy is not the encompassing cultural value; rather, it is one contextually stressed or unstressed way of construing caste in the village, and it exists alongside the values of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness that are associated with the central-peripheral, "royal" model of intercaste ritual relationships. (1988:512)

In short, the Dumontian interpretation whereby status (Brahmin/purity/hierarchy) utterly encompasses and supersedes power (Kshatrya/temporal dominance) is shown, *as a general, all-embracing ideological value*, to overstate the case, by neglecting the ritual/ideological significance of the so-called strictly "temporal" ruler. If this is accepted, the famous "radical distinction" between status and power breaks down - and with it, Dumont's insistence on the absolute and holistic sway of an ideology of purity. More exactly, I should refer to an ideology of the opposition of the pure and the impure; ultimately, the idea-value that Dumont saw as gripping the allegedly collective Indian mind was, as far as I can see, not purity per se, but the *opposition* (of pure and impure, in whatever context), itself. The fascination was not with the idea of purity, but with the very idea of asymmetrical opposition, which is the basis of hierarchy². Purity was merely the particular parameter adopted to allow a concrete expression of the play of this asymmetrical opposition in society (through cultural factors of commensality, endogamy, and so on). People (all) thought in terms of hierarchy, avers Dumont, so their society was naturally a hierarchical one. The argument is basically circular, and its application in the Balinese case is criticised in the following Section.

To conclude this all-too-sketchy discussion on the relationship between priest and king in Hindu "thought" first, however, I return at last to Bali, and Miller's (1982) attempted demolition of Geertz's *Negara* (1980) - in Miller's estimation, "such a warped

view of Balinese society" (1982:57). Partly following Schulte Nordholt's (1981) review, in which incidentally the latter also refutes Geertz's downplaying of princely power in favour of theatrical ritual "pomp", Miller castigates Geertz for failing to grasp the nature of what is, or was, effectively a dual sovereignty (in Bali as in India) of court high priest and king (*purohita* and *raja* - both Balinese terms are from Sanskrit). Miller stresses the partnership of priest and king - what Boon later (1990:167) calls the "double apex of Hindu hierarchy" - as the source of all authority. The priest is "an acknowledged servant but at the same time ritually superior" to the king, who could banish a Brahmana from the realm, yet because of the prohibition on hypogamous marriage could not marry the Brahmana's daughter (Miller, 1982:56-57).

Yet Miller (*ibid*) seems to do Geertz an injustice when he selectively quotes from *Negara*, wherein the Brahmana high priests (*pedanda*) are reduced to "parts of the king's regalia" (Geertz, 1980:126), i.e. relatively unimportant, compared to the king's divine "numinous centre of the world" (*ibid*). Geertz in fact goes on to hedge his bets, undermining the impression of relative priestly insignificance that he has just created, and produces evidence for a Balinese conceptualising of the *pedanda*, in particular the court priest or *purohita*, in glowing terms. Elsewhere in *Negara*, Geertz (1980:37) refers to "the ancient Balinese lawbooks" which affirmed just the sort of mutual high-status interdependence that Miller argues for: "ruler and priest were to one another as a ship to its helmsman" (*ibid*).

Geertz of course realised that this lack of dissociation between status and power in Balinese Hindu society meant that the Dumontian caste model could not apply to Bali. This is why I prefer to refer to *kasta* (BI) in Bali; the term has the virtue of reminding us of "caste" but also connotes significant difference from the archetypal Indian system. It remains now to see what authors have made of the caste-like nature of the Triwangsa-Sudra status model, and of the very idea that a dominant ideology has held sway in Bali at all, and the relevance or otherwise of idea-values such as a local equivalent of Dumontian purity.

Purity and other candidate core values in Bali

Balinese certainly have a concept (*kesucian*) superficially similar to the idea of purity I have been discussing above, that is, a ritual (as opposed to a merely functional) cleanliness which - and this is the really salient point - is at risk of being sullied by one's own actions or by events beyond one's control which affect someone to whom one is linked in some way. There are several terms denoting such defilement, but the commonest, general term is *sebel*, which can apply to an individual (say, a woman during her period³) or to a whole village - for example, if a murder takes place in a village temple, or, less so

nowadays, if a woman gives birth to opposite-sex twins (permitted for high-*kasta* parents but considered "incestuous" for commoners: see Boon 1977:138ff and 1990:95ff). Specific terms⁴, which represent elaborations of the *sebel* concept, include *reged* (temporary impurity after childbirth), *cuntaka* (due to a death in the family), *leteh* (for family, *banjar*, or village, after a serious defiling event); there is also a minor form, *tampu* (cf Polynesian *tabu*), which is a slight spiritual debilitation suffered, for example, by someone walking under a clothesline full of washing (including undergarments, the real crux of the matter). All but the most trivial forms of *sebel* require proportionate offerings to re-establish ritual purity for the individual, family, or community.

But can such a concept of purity underpin a full-fledged hierarchy à la Dumont? It seems not. Balinese "purity" lacks the all-pervasive cultural penetration (assuming for the moment that any idea can have such penetration) required to constitute a "cardinal value" sufficiently potent to hierarchise the society in Dumontian terms - despite the presence of ranked, ideally endogamous title-groups bearing a close resemblance to the Indic model. But proponents of Dumontian hierarchy (who tend to be French themselves - see Duff-Cooper, 1993:135) have discovered another candidate "cardinal value" in the ethnographically famous Balinese opposition of *kaja-kelod* ("mountainward-seaward") (Guermonprez, 1990:71; Ottino, 1993:41-42). This distinction is not merely a geographical commonplace but rather attracts an evaluation analogous to the "purer-less pure" opposition just discussed. The standard explanation attributes the purer/more auspicious value of *kaja* to its proximity to the gods (who inhabit high places, especially mountaintops - a not uncongenial idea to Western observers), relative to *kelod*, which is seaward (less near the gods/closer to that great sink of demons and hobgoblins, the sea).

Guermonprez (whose excellent treatise on the "metalsmith" commoner title-group, the Pande, was mentioned above) is perhaps the principal such proponent of a Dumontian hierarchical analysis of Balinese society. He makes no bones of his structuralist perspective as he worries about "the relation of the parts to the whole . . . in village studies" (1990b:57) and, echoing his guru Dumont, as he deplores "prevailing Western perspectives which tend to ignore hierarchy as a principle of order" (ibid:57). Guermonprez indeed adopts the *kaja-kelod* (glossed by him here as "high/low") opposition as the Balinese equivalent of the Indian pure-impure dichotomy (1990a:203), and, *voilà!* - *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. And *la même chose* is of course that "Balinese culture puts in practice hierarchical dualism" (ibid:204). The difference from the Indian case, for Guermonprez⁵, is one of the nature of the cardinal value which activates the hierarchy - in Bali, he says, the high-low opposition replaces the pure-impure distinction of Dumontian caste society.

Duff-Cooper (1993) rejects the application of Dumontian theory and the "tropological hegemony of hierarchy" (Duff-Cooper, 1993:147) altogether in the Balinese case, in what amounts to a rejection of holistic approaches. He echoes the objections of Appadurai to theoretical "gatekeeping concepts" (1986a:357) and what the latter dryly calls "the social scientific invention of India" (1986b:745) - an invention that Duff-Cooper sees as being carried over to Bali by Guernonprez (notably 1990b).

Social inequality in a Bali Aga village

Ottino however insists on a Dumontian hierarchical analysis of Balinese social inequality, based on her own fieldwork (1991, 1993), and reiterated in a reanalysis (1994) of Danandjaja's (1980) work on the mountain village of Trunyan, a so-called Bali Aga settlement. Trunyan is one of several "indigenous" Balinese villages, located mainly in the mountainous interior and northeast coast of the island, which have retained a pre-Javanised (therefore non-*kasta*) culture.

In the publications just mentioned, and in a recent review (1995) of another French scholar (Tcherkezoff, 1987), Ottino follows Guernonprez in applying the hierarchical approach to observed group status inequalities in Balinese villages where the Triwangsa (and hence *kasta* distinctions) are absent. She is more circumspect, however, in allowing that there is no single, supreme cardinal value which might ideologically hierarchise those societies. However, she defends the general principle with examples from Trunyan of key asymmetric dualisms or "dyads". These are given as "purity/pollution, bringing into play the relation high/low . . . as well as the differential status of the four directions: *kaja/kelod* . . . and *kangin/kauh* (east/west)" (1993:41-42), in the realm of the spatial layout of houseyards, and (following Guernonprez, 1990b), the dyad *desa adat/banjar* (village/ward). Both authors claim that the ritual village (*desa adat*) with its typical set of three "foundation" temples ideologically encompasses and hence subordinates each of its constituent residential wards (*banjar*).

In her interpretation of Danandjaja's descriptive volume on the Trunyanese, Ottino seemingly abandons the totalising aspect of the Dumontian approach (while still finding symbolic "dyads" of cogent ideological force). Hence for the Trunyanese, hierarchy is "not so much a principle of organisation according to which all origin groups are integrated into the society of the village, as an expression of a continuous negotiation of status between origin groups competing for supremacy" (1994:485). This outlook is much more congenial to my own impressions of status rivalry in Bali; although my fieldwork took place in a community with a significant Triwangsa presence, the idea of a

continuous negotiation of status better fits my observations than the idea of a dominant ideology or totalising "principle of organisation". Of course, allowing that status has to be "negotiated" undermines the applicability of hierarchy theory, which is by definition a totalising social paradigm.

Ottino retains her allegiance to a generally hierarchical approach; she identifies "the fundamental value" (the primacy of "values" and social integration being a Dumontian stipulation) in Trunyan as "the unity and cohesion of [the] village"⁶ (1994:485). Hence she associates this ideology of unity with the ritual village (*desa adat*) which, as in her conclusions concerning her own fieldwork site, takes precedence or encompasses the residential sub-divisions (*ward/banjar*) and rival origin-groups in the village. This ideological precedence she sees as operating to impose limits on the potentially disruptive status rivalry between groups in the village. Resonances of this view will be found in my analysis of devotion by high-status villagers to an inherently status-effacing ideology of village and *banjar* communality (Chapters Five and Six).

As to the nature of status rivalry in Trunyan, Ottino summarises Danandjaja's description of the two key origin groups in that village, characterised as "first settlers" and "political rulers" (*ibid*). The "first settler" group (now represented by four sub-divisions or *dadia* lineages; cf Geertz and Geertz, 1975) claims highest ritual status or precedence, as would be expected with an Austronesian population⁷, but does not have the status of political power - or, more accurately in the present era of an independent Indonesia, the status of the former rulers of the village. This status is claimed by descendants of Pasek Gelgel overlords who took power there in the distant past. Ottino refers to several origin myths, by which these status-groups seek to legitimate their status claims. Space constraints prevent a comprehensive unravelling here of the mythic complexity that Danandjaja describes and Ottino analyses; what I find most noteworthy is the appeal of not only the "first settler" group, but also the (relative newcomer) "political rulers", to divine origins for status legitimisation.

The status of the most prominent "first settler" *dadia* hinges on a myth of descent from a goddess and the first human king of Trunyan (who came, interestingly enough, from Java). Yet the "political rulers", acknowledged to have come originally from outside as conquerors, have still managed to claim descent from a common ancestor senior even to those of the "first settlers", namely the older brother of the goddess just mentioned as apical ancestor of the latter. This older brother is regarded as "supreme ruler of the whole pantheon as the originator of the ancestral customs and traditions" (Ottino, 1994:483). He and his sister were purely divine creatures, the offspring of another goddess and the sun itself. Thus by having long ago taken over, and now continuing to ritually support, the shrines associated with these divine forebears, the descendants of invading overlords have

apparently also seized the ideological "high ground" and, as it were, forged (in both senses) an ancestry that cosmologically surpasses that of the "first settlers" themselves.

This legitimation however is far from uncontested, but the "political rulers" have over time succeeded in establishing a *kasta*-like separation, with themselves as *jero* (insider) and the rest of the population as *jaba* (outsider), indeed reminiscent of the same separation effected by the Triwangsa/*kasta* groups vis-à-vis the majority Sudra in other parts of Bali, discussed above. This is not so much a case of power encompassing status (which of course would be a Dumontian scandal) as an example of the (controversial) acquisition by power-holders of superior status, at first through the use of force, which of course cannot in itself confer any ideological status, but then, over generations, by maintaining a praxis (the support of crucial shrines) which apparently has achieved a degree of ideological legitimation for the power/"political ruler" groups. A survey of the literature which refers to the historical manipulation of status in Bali will show that such a logically unfeasible scenario as that just outlined (how can newcomers appropriate the ancestors of unrelated people whom they have just conquered?) is "par for the course".

Thus in Trunyan we have a "first settler" hereditary status-group apparently relegated to outsider (*jaba*) status, and a parvenu overlord group claiming insider (*jero*) status. The latter base their claims on a combination of historically-wielded power/puissance⁹ and an ideological supremacy as descendants of divine village founders. The "first settlers" have nevertheless retained precedence in ritual matters - and since ritual and political life are so intertwined in Bali, the resultant complexities of the "continuous negotiation of status" between the groups can be readily appreciated.

Settlement unity as core value

As alluded to above, Ottino also reaches the same conclusion as Guernonprez does in another paper (1990b), to the effect that the ritual village, the *desa adat*, embodies for its members a posited cardinal value of settlement unity and cohesion, thereby ideologically taking precedence over the constituent hamlets or *banjar* of the village. Ritual obligations and orientation of villagers should therefore be first and foremost to the *desa adat* (demonstrated by the scale of ceremonies held at *desa adat* temples and participation by all villagers), with *banjar*, status-group and family ritual of lesser significance. In Chapter Five I show that this putative ideological orientation of villagers to the *desa adat*, with its typical three-temple set of foundation temple (*pura puseh*), village council temple (*pura desa/pura bale agung*), and death temple (*pura dalem*), was confirmed to a large extent by my observations in Sepenan.

There was some evidence however of aloofness by the Brahmana *kasta* status-group - some assertion of the ideologically-based superiority of that group vis-a-vis the *adat* village population and its ancestors. At the same time, Brahmana and other high-*kasta* group members were enthusiastic participants in most of the core *adat* village ritual, in which the *kasta* status of villagers was not recognised. Solidarity of the village community will be shown to be one of the major ideological motivations of Sepenan residents. The same sentiment - an egalitarian communal ideal - was demonstrated by Sepenan Kaja *banjar* members, and is covered in Chapter Six.

The literature alludes to the alleged orientation of "gentry" or high-*kasta* villagers to the wider clan, expressed by a concentration on ritual events at clan temples and origin shrines (*kawitan*) located outside the village, while basically ignoring locally-important ritual at the village's own public temples (e.g. Geertz and Geertz, 1975:6-7). In Sepenan I found that many villagers did indeed have links to origin shrines in other places. However, this applied to many low-*kasta* people, such as members of the Sudra title-groups mentioned previously. It was true also for some people who were not members of any named clan or title-group, but simply had roots in other parts of Bali and had a *kawitan* shrine somewhere else on the island.

Paying homage to their ancestors at those distant shrines was for many an annual event (at the shrine's *odalan* anniversary rites). This affiliation certainly did not detract from their affiliation and devotion to their settlement of residence, and they demonstrated this by their participation in frequent village and *banjar* ritual events, as described in later Chapters. As mentioned earlier, Ottino proposed a core value of settlement unity and cohesion for the Trunyan villagers. Potentially disruptive status rivalry between hereditary village factions was effectively held in check by the ideological supremacy of the core value of village unity. In Sepenan, rivalry between claimants for traditional status (whether based on the more "Austronesian" precedence of village founders or origin-groups, or on the introduced *kasta* status hierarchy) existed but was not a significant feature. Rather, the rivalry was one between an egalitarian ideology of communal solidarity and factionalism - based for some groups on the hierarchical *kasta* model, but for others on non-*kasta* title-group exclusiveness.

I have felt it worthwhile to make this detour via the village of Trunyan because Ottino's analysis of Danandjaja's ethnography highlights the question of the applicability of theories of hierarchy and dualism to Balinese societies. While noting the salience of dualistic concepts like the mountainward-seaward/sacred-profane/high-low (*kaja/kelod*) oppositions, I share Duff-Cooper's (1993) doubts that the existence of such concepts justifies the positing of a generalised mode of thought, moreover "traditional thought", and "holistic ideologies", said to characterise "traditional societies", as Ottino argues for

in general terms in her review of Tcherkezoff (1995:190). Ottino is certainly aware of the importance of context and the negotiation of status in Bali, but she also stresses the primacy of social integration as cardinal value.

In the following (ethnographic) Chapters I find that there was indeed an ideology of community (village and *banjar*) unity in which hierarchical status had no place, in the fieldwork village. This ideal was however in competition with status - neither ideology had the force of a Dumontian cardinal value, hence neither concept had the force of true hegemony. Neither hierarchical status nor egalitarian communalism held sway, but coexisted in a sometimes uneasy balance.

Hierarchy Accommodating Egalitarianism

This view accords fairly well with the general position taken by Howe (1987, 1989, 1991, 1995) on social hierarchy in Bali. He finds a caste-like system of ranked title-groups holding sway in the fertile southern plains, a basically egalitarian¹⁰, putatively aboriginal "Bali Aga" model in the dry mountainous regions, and a mixture of the two extremes in geographically intermediate settlements (1989:47-48). Howe at times seems to partially embrace a Dumontian version of hierarchy for Bali, when he is tempted to follow Guernonprez; thus he allows that *kasta* rank orderings are "encompassed by the hierarchical *varna/bangsa* scheme" (ibid:53), and elsewhere finds justification, in "an asymmetric conceptual contrast between spiritual authority and temporal power", for "classing Bali as a caste society" (1987:143). At other times, Howe is more inclined to follow Barth, in preferring more context-related "systems of rank . . . generally restricted in their fields of relevance" (1987:147, quoting Barth 1960:113) rather than the totalising hierarchy of the Dumontian model, with its requirement for an all-pervading ideological basis.

Warren (1993:96-97) provides a succinct justification for the inapplicability of Dumontian hierarchy in the Balinese case. Caste hierarchy implies a theoretically unlimited "nesting" of asymmetrical dyads (based, in the Dumontian caste model, on a cardinal value of relative purity, resulting in the myriad sub-castes of India). But the Balinese egalitarian *seka* principle, the existence of which no-one denies, ideologically subordinates the members of the *seka* group (e.g. the *banjar* community) to the common good of the group itself, and also, crucially, prohibits relative inequality between group members themselves.

My fieldwork findings in Sepenan confirm this status-negating feature of the egalitarian *seka* ideology in contexts where communal solidarity is paramount (pan-village ritual, formal *banjar* meetings, *banjar* self-help projects, etc). Acknowledgment of the *kasta* hierarchy was at such times largely overridden. On other occasions, members of *kasta* groups asserted their hierarchical superiority, in public and semi-public ritual venues and in exclusivist contexts pointedly restricted to members of a certain *kasta* status-group (notably the Brahmana). The hierarchical *kasta* ideology was certainly present in Sepenan, and was a powerful motivating force for elitist group solidarity among some (not all) members of the *kasta* elite. At the same time, the egalitarian ideology of communal solidarity regardless of potentially divisive status ranking was also acknowledged by villagers, of whatever status.

Notes

¹ This is still a simplification of the reality of Hindu Indian social life. Raheja (1988:505) reminds us that long ago, McKim Marriott (1959) had cautioned against "one-dimensional attributional theories of caste ... that assumed that caste ranking is determined by the 'purity' of a caste's characteristic way of life". Marriott pointed to the often-noted consumption of liquor and meat, penchant for violence, and other far-from-pure traits of some Kshatriya groups, which nevertheless still enjoyed an ascribed status ranking second only to Brahmins.

² If suggesting that such an esoteric concept could inform popular thought seems outlandish, I refer to Ottino's (1995) review of Tcherkezoff (1987). Applying Dumontian hierarchy to the Balinese situation, she concluded: "[I]t is the configuration itself which is the value-system". I personally doubt that whole populations could ever be so thoroughly mesmerised by such an abstruse concept as Dumont's "encompassment of the contrary" that it becomes the organising principle of their whole society. Such scepticism would of course be attacked by French structuralist theorists as demonstrating a lamentable preoccupation with individuals (and individualism) at the expense of the total social entity.

³ Hence, at such times, my wife would not sleep upstairs, when visiting her brother's (two-storey) house, which would have subjected him (a Brahmana also, of course) to a ritually polluting situation. She also had restrictions on cooking, and entering temples, even the houseyard shrine.

⁴ These terms, apart from *tampu* (Wayan Pastika, pers. comm.), are from Kersten's *Bahasa Bali* (1984). By far the commonest usage that I heard was for *sebel*.

⁵ In his slightly earlier work, on the Pande, Guernonprez seemed unsure of just what "cardinal value" he might seize upon to demonstrate a hierarchical organisation of Balinese society. He certainly noted the salience of ideas of purity in various contexts, but overall had to confess: "je manquais à saisir pleinement ce qu'il en était d'un «principe hiérarchique»" (1987:199). Nevertheless he goes on to suggest that the system of temples might provide the key to Balinese hierarchy, as objectively representing the value-idea "gods/ancestors" (ibid:200). There is certainly something of a ranking of temples in Bali (Besakih mother temple/the six "state" temples/various important water temples/local or village temples), but I cannot see the opposition, essential for a Dumontian analysis, which could be derived from "gods/ancestors" in the way that the pure-impure opposition derives from the cardinal value of purity. Later, he settled for the high-low opposition described.

⁶ Presumably a quite recent "cardinal value", as it is proposed as an ideological crystallisation of Trunyanese "currently struggling to maintain a separate cultural identity within an increasingly normative Balinese state [sic]" (ibid). Village unity as a preoccupation, if not a Dumontian cardinal value, could however still be proposed, in terms of whole-village orientation to deified founding ancestors of the village - which here as elsewhere in Bali has its own complications, see following text.

⁷ On status as a function of temporal/historical precedence of groups ancestors in eastern Indonesian societies, see Fox (1989), van Wouden (1988 (1935)), Reuter (1992).

⁸ Schulte Nordholt (1996:23-26 *passim*) provides a good historical perspective of the manipulation of genealogies and the imperative of "anchoring power in a legitimating past" (ibid:25) of the Satria dynasty of the former kingdom of Mengwi. Status negotiability and mobility in Bali are also treated in Boon (1977:165-172) and Howe (1995).

⁹ The Balinese concept of *wibawa* (akin to "charisma" or "noble bearing") is frequently applied to members of "ruling" groups - Satria usually, but also (as here, where there are no Triwangsa) other groups, and individuals, of political pre-eminence. I have noticed an expectation amongst villagers that members of such groups will exhibit *wibawa*, sometimes expressed as "having a shining face" - this of course does no harm to the continuation of political hegemony by ruling groups.

¹⁰ We have seen, in the discussion on the "Bali Aga" Trunyanese, above, that egalitarian sentiment was far from obvious; rather, an ongoing rivalry of status was a better description of the state of affairs in that

village. It seems to me that, when authors such as Howe refer to this aboriginal Balinese egalitarianism, they basically mean that there is no Indic-model, *kasta*-type hierarchy in those settlements. There is certainly a systematic ranked hierarchy of village officials in such societies. Although promotion by seniority is a norm, hereditary titles are also found, and hereditary status differences are found even in so-called archetypal Bali Aga villages like Tenganan, where Korn found a fully-fledged system of ranked status-groups, which he called "classes" (1960:330ff). These "classes" were also divided into "right" and "left" groups, a dualism reminiscent of that found throughout East Indonesia (see note 7 above).

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Chapter Three. Sepenan: the Fieldwork Village Community

In this Chapter, I briefly describe the locality of my fieldwork site, to situate the locus of the narrative in the wider Balinese scene, before going on to introduce the main characters who played more or less important parts in the community life in which I was privileged for a short time to participate. Mindful of Barth's exhortation against rigidly group-focused depictions, mentioned in Chapter One, it is my aim to represent these people as flesh-and-blood actors in the daily drama of life in their particular corner of the world, and not merely as anonymous members of particular status groups (or of the majority category of *anak jaba*, "outsiders") concerned solely with that membership (or lack of it) and its implications for them in some all-consuming status rivalry. As such, I need to provide some detail about the various personalities, their relationships, and the physical setting of Sepenan village and its *banjar* ward, Sepenan Kaja, where we lived.

The Fieldwork Site

Village fundamentals

The village of Sepenan was a relatively old settlement (albeit one whose boundaries have shifted somewhat over time), located not far from the regional capital of Gianyar, on the paved road that runs the four or five kilometres south from Gianyar to the coast. On a still night, the sound of the waves crashing onto the beach at Lebih could be clearly heard, even in Sepenan Kaja, the northernmost and hence furthest *banjar* of Sepenan from the coast. The village was laid out evenly along both sides of the main road, with unpaved side roads giving access to the many houseyards not having frontage to the main road. The *pekarangan* or houseyards presented a typical and fairly uniform appearance, of thatched *meru* (tiered roofs) atop houseyard shrines, and the usual family dwellings and pavilions, mostly of masonry construction and roofed with terra-cotta tiles, all enclosed within two-metre high walls of painted masonry or wattle-and-daub construction, with single entrance gates of more or less ornate design.

The general architectural uniformity (at first glance) of the many houseyards was relieved by the more imposing presence of two larger complexes, both fronting the main road. These were the Satria residences (*puri*) known as Jero Gede (located in Sepenan Kaja) and Jero Tengah (on neighbouring S. Tengah territory). Directly opposite Jero Gede stood the impressive, white-washed office of the *kepala desa*, the government village head. The relatively large *bale banjar* or community meeting hall for each *banjar* also fronted the paved road; these structures were basically raised, open-sided pavilions with tiled roofs, with a small, lockable section at the rear for storage of *banjar* equipment.

An open field, with a sacred *waringin* (banyan) tree, occupied a central position in each *banjar*, serving as an informal meeting-place, soccer field or volleyball court. Scattered throughout the *banjar* territory were several coffee stalls (*waring*), each with a shaded bench out front where people, particularly men and youths, congregated at various times of day, especially the early evening, to sip sweet, black *kopi Bali*, smoke, and gossip or tease one another - the more loudly and theatrically, the better.

Few people owned cars but most houseyards owned one or more motorcycles, generally of the Honda step-through variety, and these vehicles seemed to be in constant use, their din a constant feature of the local soundscape, from early morning until around ten o'clock at night. People with business in nearby Gianyar, but without transport, usually took an *ojek* (paid to ride on the back of a privately-owned motorcycle), for which they simply waited in front of the *bale banjar* until one showed up.

Most houseyards had several shrubs and trees within their walls. Fruit trees (jackfruit, banana, starfruit, the attractive but (to me) watery-tasteless *jambu*) and plants yielding flowers prized for ritual offerings (frangipani, hibiscus, *cempaka*) were favoured. The ubiquitous coconut palms seemed to dominate the landscape, but on closer inspection were found mainly in small, dedicated fields (*tegal*) dotted around between residential houseyards. The dangers of falling coconuts precluded their planting within the houseyards.

There were 702 resident *kepala keluarga* (KK, family heads) registered at the village head's office in late 1993, giving a total population of nearly 3,400 in the four *banjar* wards of the village. Farming (mostly smallholdings of wet rice fields, and some cattle raising) was the primary income source for about two-thirds of the village, but many were civil servants (*pegawai negeri*), working in the district administration or in the capital. Some people worked in the tourist industry, either commuting daily to the tourist meccas of Kuta/Legian or Sanur, or staying there during the week. There were perhaps a dozen goldsmiths in the village, who fashioned jewellery for resale in the gold shops of Gianyar and Denpasar.

There was one primary school in the village; the nearest high school was in Gianyar town. Students crammed into *bemo* minibuses for the short journey, or cycled. There was a strong pro-education ethos among villagers, and virtually all school-age children attended school, although the small basic fees payable did represent a burden for the poorest families.

Electricity and piped water were both available, and the great majority of houseyards were connected. The basic allocation of 450 watts total load per houseyard was relatively cheap to connect; higher wattage capacities were relatively expensive to acquire. Low-wattage electric lighting was the main use. Informants said that the widespread use of lighting had made the village a far more congenial place to walk around at night. Sightings of ghosts and suspected witches had dropped dramatically in frequency since electricity came to the village.

The piped water had to be boiled before drinking. Many used bottled gas cookers for this and other cooking, while some houseyards (or individual kitchens within houseyards) still used small wood-burning hearths. Kitchens were often separate buildings with plaited rattan walls and thatched roofs, without chimneys. Smoke would fill the kitchen during cooking, and escape where it could through cracks in the walls. I could never convince people of the virtues of chimneys.

There were three separate large public temples on the village territory: the temple of the dead (*pura dalem*), located in *banjar* Sepenan Kaja; the combined village congregation temple and foundation temple (*pura desa/pura puseh*), in Sepenan Tengah, and *pura sakenan* (a branch of a pan-Bali sacred temple on Serangan Island), in Cabaang. The graveyard/cremation ground was located next to the death temple, ringed by very tall trees, which gave the place an eerie feel (*tenget*) at night. All these temples had the walled, roofless "Polynesian" design described in Chapter One. They were divided into an outer and inner courtyard, with the latter the most sacred part, housing the various typical raised platforms or cupboard-like altars and the larger *bale* pavilions (much as described by Covarrubias, 1972 (1937):265-269).

These were "public" temples; their congregations were, in theory, the whole population of the village (status-based dissension on this point is treated in Chapter Five). These temples had annual "anniversary" ritual celebrations, which it was the duty of villagers to support, but otherwise there was no regular "worship" as practised in churches or mosques. The *pura dalem* plus the combined *pura desa* and *pura puseh* temples comprised the typical *kahyangan tiga* "village" temple set found in most villages across Bali. There was also a smaller "marketplace" temple (*pura melanting*), and each of the four *banjar* had its own small temple near the respective *banjar* pavilions. Every

houseyard had its own separate shrine (*sanggah*) in the purest/most auspicious (mountainward) corner - some were quite elaborate. The shrine (called *merajan* for Triwangsa families) of the Satria *puri* Jero Gede was as large as some of the smaller houseyards.

Sepenan Kaja: the local fieldwork community

The effective community in the larger, southern plains villages is the corporate neighbourhood (ward, hamlet) residents' association or *banjar*¹. This is a geographical and demographic entity, but also a ritual/religious entity, sanctified through the support of its own shrine. The unity and communality of the *banjar* is symbolised by the (more or less impressive) *banjar* meeting pavilion (*bale banjar*). This is the site of monthly meetings of members, where sundry matters of sacred and secular importance are (ideally) debated in an atmosphere of self-consciously restrained gentility and egalitarianism.

The *bale banjar* is also the site of regular gamelan orchestra rehearsals, dance lessons for schoolchildren, the construction of elaborate funeral towers for deceased *banjar* members, and (government regulations notwithstanding) virtually daily gambling at the card games *ceki* and *dom*. (Cock-fights are venues for more serious gambling, but these are held - with police permits, in temples on ritual occasions, and, without official sanction but often with the turning of a pre-arranged "blind eye" - in secluded fields, at regular intervals.)

As explained earlier, our field site was the *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja, the location of my wife's father's natal houseyard. *Kaja* means mountain-near; so, in this southern village, the *banjar* name means "North Sepenan" - as long as it is remembered that the "north" of *kaja* has spiritual rather than geographic connotations, as being closer (in a given village settlement) to the abode of the gods atop Gunung Agung, the massive volcano that dominates the landscape of eastern Bali. Further west, out of sight of Gunung Agung, other peaks serve the same cosmological purpose. *Kaja* in villages north of these mountains is therefore actually geographic south. The custom village or village-as-ritual-unit (*desa adat*) of Sepenan consists of four such *banjar* - S. Kaja, S. Tengah ("central"), S. Kelod (opposite of *kaja*; similar in meaning to "nether" in the names of English towns like Nether Wallop, or in the "Netherlands" - but with a spiritual as well as topological significance), and Cabaang. The four settlements are virtually contiguous, except that Cabaang is slightly separated physically from the other three, and is actually

more *kelod* (closer to the sea) than S. Kelod, which despite its name is therefore *kaja* to another *banjar* of the same village.

Such cosmo-geographical ironies are commonplace in Bali, and serve as useful reminders of the relative, contextual, and historically-conditioned nature of present-day place names and village layouts. Sepenan provides a good illustration of this in the location of the temple of the dead, the *pura dalem*. The literature always refers to a strict hierarchy of siting, in any given village, for the three "village" temples of the *desa adat* ritual community (Swellengrebel, 1960:43; A. Hobart et al, 1996:91). Thus, the temple honouring village founders (*pura puseh*) must be in the most *kaja* position relative to the other two temples; and the village council temple (*pura desa*) should be "above" the least auspicious and most chthonian temple, the *pura dalem*. In Sepenan, however, the most northerly/*kaja* temple of the three was actually the death temple, perversely located in S. Kaja territory, with its "purer" and more auspicious sister temples languishing in S. Kelod. This reverses the alleged Balinese norm, and brings to mind a Balinese saying: *desa, kala, patra* ([everything depends on] "the place, the times, the local rules")².

The *banjar* officially had a population of 912, under 171 KK (*kepala keluarga*, family heads). There were 40 Brahmana KK, living in 13 *gria* - an unusually high Brahmana representation³ for a single *banjar*. The Satria *puri* Jero Gede had three KK with the title Anak Agung. There was one Satria houseyard with three KK with the lesser Satria title Dewa (Desak for women). There were two KK with the Wesia *kasta* title Gusti. Of the Sudra/non-*kasta* population, there were 15 KK of the Pasek Kayu Selem title-group, 5 KK of the Pasek Pulosari, 5 KK of the Pasek Segening, and 2 KK of the Pasek Gelgel. There were also 5 KK of the Pande title-group - relatively recent migrants from Sepenan Kelod, where the large Pande representation were informants for Guermonprez (1987). The balance of the Sepenan Kaja population were Sudra people who did not actively claim affiliation to a named title-group.

At least one representative from every houseyard was required to attend the monthly *banjar* meetings (*sankepan banjar*), on pain of a (nominal) fine. The *banjar* meetings dealt with a range of issues affecting the community, both ritual and secular in nature. All residential land on *banjar* territory was in fact *banjar* property, held in trust for its ultimate owners, the gods. Families lived in their houseyards as perpetual tenants, the tenancy passed on to descendants. Properties reverted to the *banjar* when a family line ran out of descendants, or if all such descendants had permanently left the village and there was no family representative left to maintain the property. This principle of communal ownership of houseyard land was a major foundation of *banjar* corporatism.

The rights and obligations of *banjar* community members, particularly in the ritual field, will be canvassed in following Chapters, where the intersection of the *banjar* ideology of egalitarian community and the inherent separatism of the *kasta* hierarchical ideology and Sudra title-group solidarity is explored.

Gria Suci, the fieldsite residence

The houseyard that we occupied was named Gria Suci, literally "Holy/Pure Brahmana Residence" (cf *kesucian*, purity). It was one of thirteen *gria* in Sepenan Kaja, ranging in size and condition from the fairly sumptuous to the very basic. Triwangsa residences have individual names, particularly those of Brahmana and higher Satria - dwellings of the latter being generically called *puri* (for closer relatives of former kings; e.g. Puri Gianyar) and *jero* (for the residences of more distant relatives of former royalty; e.g. Jero Gede). Although I use the refined English word "residence", being faithful to the status implications of these Balinese terms, I should stress that there is not really any expectation by Balinese that Triwangsa dwellings are always relatively luxurious (except for the residences of kings, such as Puri Gianyar, the still impressive complex housing the *raja* of Gianyar). It is the status of the resident family head(s) that determines the term used for the houseyard. Hence a Brahmana man's houseyard is always a *gria*, even if he is very poor, and the buildings in the *gria* have earthen floors, woven bamboo walls, and leaky tin roofs.

When we arrived to take up residence at Gria Suci, in March 1993, the *gria* was in a rather run-down state, except for one structure, the *gedong* - a traditional half-enclosed, half-open pavilion of timber, red brick, and ornately-carved, soft, grey volcanic stone called *paras*. This building, located on the auspicious northern or *kaja* side of the compound, was used as overnight sleeping accommodation for my father-in-law's family when they were visiting from Denpasar for one of the frequent ceremonial occasions; it was also the site for formal meetings such as those of the parties to weddings (i.e. bride's and groom's families) and the like. The shrine or *merajan* (Triwangsa term; otherwise *sanggah*), located in the most auspicious/mountainward corner of the *gria* (in that part of Bali, the north-east or *kaja-kangin*), was not in the best of repair.

The other structures enclosed by the high masonry wall of the *gria* were, in the east, a *bale dangin* (open pavilion used on certain ritual occasions, notably to lay out deceased family members); in the south, a kitchen and sleeping quarters for the only family member then still resident (my father-in-law's late older brother, Gus Aji Cakra) and his wife and

daughters; and in the west, a *bale dauh*, a basically sound dwelling, of three bedrooms, guest room and huge bathroom/toilet, the roof of which had fallen in due to rotting of the timbers. We had this roof repaired by local tradesmen, and moved in after the application of a fresh coat of paint by local women (house painting seemed to be an exclusively female occupation in Bali).

The *gria* was located where a minor but trafficable dead-end road was joined by a smaller lane or *gang*, useable by two-wheel transport. These roads were dusty in the dry season and became a quagmire in the wet (December to March) when we lived there, but have both since been paved. There was a field of mature coconut trees across the *gang* from the single entrance to the houseyard, and another similar field, rather more unkempt and wild, over the "back" or *kelod* section of the wall. The houseyard layout was one of a central courtyard of bare earth, with flowering bushes around its edges, two or three large trees which provide flowers for ritual offerings (*banten*), and the buildings arranged around the courtyard, more or less flush with the perimeter wall, with their main windows looking inwards onto the courtyard. This arrangement gave an intimate atmosphere and a sense of isolation from the outside world (aided by the high perimeter wall and single narrow entrance).

Note on fieldsite selection rationale and positioning of the author

The choice of fieldsite was virtually made for me by the circumstances surrounding my decision to adopt the topic of this dissertation. During my undergraduate training at the Australian National University in Canberra I had met and later married my "chief informant", Ida Ayu Mediani, while she was completing a Master's degree in Archaeology. We married in a cross-cultural variation of the Balinese elopement tradition (*ngerorod*), in a civil ceremony at the Australian consul's residence in Sanur. The marriage would later be reinforced by a customary *adat* ceremony at the fieldwork site.

The original "wedding" required the (to me) theatrical touch of elopement because of Mediani's high *kasta* status as a Brahmana woman, which - according to the dual norms of status-group endogamy and hypergamy - effectively limited her choice of spouse to a Brahmana male. That is, unless she were willing to flout the status-group norms and take a spouse from outside of the preferred category, thereby risking an uncertain level of disapproval from her family and acquaintances from the wider Brahmana *kasta* group.

In the event there seemed to be no serious objections to the marriage on the part of Mediani's family, who had in fact played host to a succession of overseas visitors over the years and in general claimed a "modern" orientation. This attitude apparently made the occasional unorthodox life decision by group members acceptable.

So it turned out that she need not have worried, but parties to such unions had been killed in the not-so-distant past (Covarrubias, 1937:144) and I heard of cases⁴ still occurring where low-*kasta* boyfriends were actively discouraged (sometimes violently) by relatives of their high-*kasta* lovers. "Modern" considerations of romantic love and/or economic security sometimes proved stronger than what some young high-*kasta* people considered "old-fashioned" status-group exclusivity norms - but their parents and other clan members often resisted hypogamous liaisons.

As I was apparently well-accepted by Mediani's immediate family, and as both her father and step-mother had an academic background (as academics at the Arts faculty of Bali's Udayana University), my small anthropological project was enthusiastically supported by the family. Furthermore, my father-in-law's natal village - which I am calling Sepenan - was ideal as a fieldsite, for both theoretical and practical reasons.

The Sepenan village community was a typical Southern lowland Balinese settlement, in which several of the various *kasta* status-groups were well represented - especially in the *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja, where the Brahmana were an unusually numerous minority. This meant that there was plenty of potential for investigation of matters related to my topic.

As well, I had the great fortune to be in the "married-in" category, albeit as an outsider and moreover a foreigner and, therefore, someone in whom locals would be slow to confide. But I did have a ready-made excuse for being there, as Mediani's husband, and the fact that I wanted to conduct research for "some sort of book" was, I believe, of only passing interest to our neighbours. Hence our participation in the extraordinarily crowded calendar of ritual events in Sepenan was not only accepted but, since we were resident members of the community (temporarily, but a year is a long time in many people's minds), expected. And - from a purely practical viewpoint - there was an empty but quite serviceable dwelling in my father-in-law's natal home, Gria Suci, available for occupation by us for the duration of fieldwork. All we had to do was clean it up, expel the dogs, and have a new roof built for the building.

One unavoidable limitation was the fact that we were of necessity closely identified with the Brahmana status-group. Our houseyard, although a small and none-too-luxurious one, was still a Brahmana *gria*. Actually, with the death of my wife's uncle (described in

Chapter Six), there was no permanently resident Brahmana male left there; but the houseyard remained "in the family", allocated in perpetuity by the *adat* village to the patriline, with my wife's father, and other male descendants of that line, retaining the right to residence there⁵.

I need to acknowledge therefore that I arrived in Sepenan and conducted my research there - low-key as it was - very much as the son-in-law and protégé of my wife's father. This Brahmana individual was a man of substance, in many ways; still a pillar of local society although he no longer lived locally. We lived in his *gria* which, as a Brahmana residence, had for most people an automatic aura of prestige about it, regardless of whether it was a grand or (as in the present case) rather modest residence. I expected that I would find it hard to elicit opinions overtly critical of high-*kasta* behaviour, especially concerning the Brahmana, from low-*kasta* villagers. I expected that villagers would assume that I would report such criticism, and its source, to my Brahmana affines, who might then bear a grudge towards the source - an uncomfortable position for any villagers critical of the status aspects of community life to find themselves in.

George Marcus, writing on the special problems of doing ethnographic research among elite groups, stated:

Normally anthropologists are empathetic with their subjects and become increasingly so the longer they are involved with them . . . Working empathy with one's subjects can be misconstrued as ideological empathy; ideological distancing from one's subjects to the point of disapproval, is a difficult condition of work in an ethnographic style of research (and may be one reason why there are so few ethnographies of elites); and ambivalence or silence in judgements on subjects makes the ethnographer's research equally vulnerable to a charge of elitism . . . (1983:23)

My Australian egalitarian world view certainly predisposed me to feelings of disapproval of any cultural system of hereditary privilege. Balancing this was my awareness of the reality that such a system was in force in Bali and definitely so in the fieldsite village. Because I was not interested in essaying an "ethnography of an elite" (in this case the high-*kasta* Balinese elite, or more narrowly the Brahmana group) I needed to establish a "working empathy", not just with the Brahmana family members and village residents, but with everybody that I had regular contact with.

This was not simply so that I could claim to produce ethnography implicitly "validated by the supposedly developed sensitivities of the person who presents it", as parodied - perhaps not entirely disingenuously - by C. Geertz (1973:24). Rather, it was precisely because I was trying to gain a deeper understanding of the ideological tensions provoked by the co-existence of antagonistic, if not mutually exclusive, ideologies of hierarchic elitism and communal egalitarianism.

To do this I had to develop sufficiently "empathetic" relations with a range of informants representing all points on the *kasta* status spectrum. Failure to do so, and a reliance largely or exclusively on data supplied by the all-too-accessible Brahmana informants around me at the fieldsite locale, would have resulted in ethnography guilty of "imitating the Brahman's representation of Hindu society", to borrow Burghart's (1990:268) phrase in his critique of Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1980).

My methodological problem was therefore to maintain the support of my (Brahmana) affines and associated high-*kasta* persons in the village while not neglecting to establish relationships with other villagers, particularly those of Sudra/low-*kasta* status. Input from the latter was vital, especially as it related to their views of the legitimacy of the traditional status hierarchy and how that system could be reconciled with the communal egalitarianism that all villagers professed to embrace.

Indeed it took many weeks of living in the village before people outside of the immediate circle of residents of the houseyard and a few high-*kasta* neighbours became comfortable enough conversing with me (in Bahasa Indonesia) to open up somewhat about village life. Even then I always had to adopt a gentle line of enquiry about anything remotely connected with status issues.

Early in the fieldwork period, the existence of discord about anything was implicitly denied or circumvented in conversation with locals. Eventually, as I made a habit of wandering around without any Brahmana "minders" accompanying me, I was able to engage people about contentious issues with some success, providing I took a very indirect approach. For example, the fact that the Brahmana as a group did not attend the important annual *odalan* festival at the village's central temple (joint *pura desa/pura puseh*) emerged during quiet conversation about that event over coffee at a roadside stall across the road from the temples in question. People were often willing to impart such (for my purposes vital) information in passing - provided I did not focus the conversation on the topic of status as such.

The fact that I also travelled to other villages, mainly in the Gianyar area, and spoke to many local people who did not know of my Brahmana affinal association also assisted in the compilation of data and opinions on the general topic of traditional status from people of various status positionings. This was useful to fill out the picture of community views about status as held more widely in Bali than in the fieldwork community itself. I also felt that the views of low-*kasta* people encountered further afield could reasonably be held to be broadly representative of their low-*kasta* counterparts in Sepenan, some of whom were undoubtedly reluctant to voice anti-*kasta* sentiment to an outsider - especially one known to be associated with a prominent Brahmana family of the village.

Members of the *Banjar* Community of Sepenan Kaja

In this section I introduce some of the residents of Sepenan Kaja with whom I had frequent interactions throughout the year and knew by name (and *kasta* title, where appropriate). Many of these were indeed members of the traditional elite, but several other prominent *banjar* members were Sudra people. I describe first the people with whom we were most intimately involved - our fellow houseyard residents.

The author's affinal relatives

The residual family at Gria Suci, 1993

On first setting up house in the *gria*, we noted that the resident family - my wife's elderly uncle and his young second wife, with two of their three daughters - had apparently fallen on hard times. The uncle had been in the military in earlier life, and had used accumulated funds to start a motorcycle hire business, which had failed. His first wife died, leaving just the one son, Gus Jendra, who had his own family in Denpasar, where he worked as a tourism operator. The uncle had remarried, in middle age, to a local low-*kasta* woman still in her teens. The uncle had cause to regret this move, especially after his health deteriorated and he suffered a stroke, which restricted his movements and made his speech hard to understand.

It was at this point that we arrived. The old man appeared to be very morose, preferring to lie in bed most of the day, apparently absorbed in dark thoughts, berating his wife for what seemed to be her grudging efforts to help him to eat, wash, and so on. I was concerned for the uncle, because I had the impression that he had decided that life was no longer worth living. Even his old dog hobbled around the courtyard, and looked like it was not much longer for this world. In fact, within four months, both of them had passed into the unseen realm of *niskala*.

The oldest of the three daughters that this uncle, Gus Aji Cakra, had fathered by his second wife had been sent to live with a related Brahmana family in Singaraja, on the north coast. This fifteen-year-old, Dayu Ade, had full board and education provided by her host

family, who were well-off, the host father being a gynaecologist with a successful practice. Her younger sisters remained at the *gria* with their parents; these were Dayu Komang and Dayu 'Tut, then aged twelve and ten respectively. Like the majority of Brahmana of my acquaintance, the girls had formal, Sanskritised names (used for example on school rolls) but used everyday familiar names, usually showing their birth order, as mentioned above. Hence, the Ade, Komang, and 'Tut (always preceded by the honorific title Dayu for these Brahmana girls) are common variations of Made, Nyoman, and Ketut - sibling numbers two, three and four respectively (number one is the aforementioned, and much older, Gus (Putu) Jendra).

Jero Rasman and status-group endogamy norms

The girls' mother, a Sudra (then aged thirty-four) originally from a houseyard about a hundred metres up the street, could be quite harsh in her treatment of her daughters, but never failed to duly call them "Dayu", even when very angry with them. She herself was known as Rasman before her marriage to my wife's uncle, when she became Jero Rasman, which she was entitled to be called for life (as a low-*kasta* wife of a Triwangsa man). Neighbourhood gossip had it, and personal observation confirmed, that Jero Rasman was inclined to flaunt the title and the status, albeit a surrogate status, that it conferred. (Note that *jero*, which basically means "inside" or "insider" is a concessionary honorific title, as described, and also a polite term for the residence of Satria title-holders, as well as the inner courtyard of temples).

The traditional Balinese tendency to patriliney has meant that men from high-status groups could choose wives from their own groups (and group endogamy was still an ideal, if often unachieved, outcome for many families from both the Triwangsa and various low-*kasta* title-groups⁶), but also from any other groups of lower status. Hypogamous liaisons on the other hand have been strictly proscribed, transgressors often having been punished with death in historical times, as already mentioned. I sometimes teased Brahmana and Satria villagers of my acquaintance, to the effect that men of those groups were greedy and wanted to have their pick of attractive women, of whatever social status, yet jealously guarded "their own" women from the "defilement" of intimate contact with status inferiors. The high-status men were presumably somehow immune from the same defilement if they had such contact with low-status women.

Usually, my suggestions of a double standard were dismissed in terms of received norms of male-centred status-group endogamy - as obvious to (high-status male)

informants as they were initially dubious to me. Their explanations highlighted the patrilineal model, symbolised by transmission of the masculine heredity principle or *purusa*. The model relegates married women to the secondary role of the physiological vehicle for this hereditary transmission of male-substance or, more accurately, male-line substance. At Balinese weddings, I was always struck by the potent symbolism of the *mepamit* ritual, usually a brief and simple ceremony of prayer at the wife's natal houseyard shrine. At this ceremony, the new wife respectfully asks leave (*mepamit*) of her ancestors, because she has now joined her husband's family and will henceforth venerate *his* ancestors, and produce children who will belong, as in previous lives they did belong, to *his* line. Just as mothers of brides (and grooms) are prone to tears at Western weddings, Balinese mothers (and fathers) are most likely, and with more cogent reason, to shed quiet tears at their daughters' *mepamit* ceremonies - because the affective "loss" of their daughters is so final and comprehensive⁷.

Hence, high-status men could defend their unfettered access to lower-status women as brides on grounds of the irrelevance of women's status to the status of their children, whose status is determined along patrilineal lines. The issue of an ideological purity and a risk of personal defilement, as in the Indian caste model, did not seem to have any salience for informants. In historical times, the issue of the status of wives of Triwangsa men was of greater moment than it is nowadays. Kings and their closer male relatives often practised polygamy, for the obvious reason that they enjoyed having legitimate sexual access to several (or indeed many) women, and they usually controlled sufficient wealth to be able to afford such indulgence.

But there was always pressure to uphold (in this case) Satria prestige via group endogamy, which prescribed at least one high-status wife (*padmi*) who could provide offspring with impeccable status credentials, both parents being from high-status groups (Geertz and Geertz, 1975:131). This obviously calls into question the alleged irrelevance of the status of mothers (implied by the patrilineal, *purusa* ideal) - indeed only the sons of kings by *padmi* wives could in theory inherit the thrones of the pre-colonial Balinese kingdoms. Of course, strategic marriages were often effected between rival kingdoms for reasons of military alliance, and daughters of kings by *padmi* mothers (hence highest status) were the obvious choice, to cement such alliances.

Satria endogamy was symbolised by the lavish ceremonial of the weddings of Satria kings and local lords, when the brides were also Satria. By contrast, these nobles emphasised their status superiority when they took lower-status co-wives, by disdaining to show up in person for the "wedding", sending instead their ceremonial *kris* dagger to represent them. Such outlandish touches have largely passed into history now, but less

blatant signifiers of status difference are still employed in marriage ritual, as I show in Chapter Six.

The impression that I have from my own observations of marriages in and around Sepenan Kaja is that Triwangsa women who married according to "traditional" norms, taken (to use the Balinese idiom) by husbands of the same or higher social status, preserved a personal sense of status pride as integral to their identity. Such women retained their existing titles (Dayu, Anak Agung, Desak, etc, rather than the concessionary Jero), although they had formally left their natal status-group on marriage. Of course, it often happened that they married into another lineage of the same overall status-group, for example when a Satria woman from village A married a Satria man from village B. Although she had left her own lineage group (with its own *kawitan* origin temple somewhere on the island), and joined her husband's lineage group, a woman in this position would still be paying homage during her married life to Satria ancestors of her husband's who are related ultimately to her own natal ancestors - who after all were also Satria. This logic is used to bolster the proscription against hypogamous marriage; such marriages result in the (high-status) wife having to pray to the lower-status ancestors of her husband, every time there is any ritual held in the husband's houseyard shrine (virilocality being the norm). This "problem" (so defined by Triwangsa *kasta* ideology) obviously does not arise with low-status wives.

Jero Rasman was a teenager when taken in marriage some seventeen years previously by the then middle-aged uncle of my wife. Gossip had it that the match was widely condemned as folly at the time, but it went ahead anyway. By the time we arrived, Gria Suci was not, as I remarked above, at a high point in its history. Uncle Cakra was affected by the twin maladies of stroke and depression. His physical infirmities were significant - both his speech and movements were marred, and his hair had turned white, giving him overall the look of a very old man. Worse, he harboured dark suspicions (well-founded, it transpired⁸) about his much younger wife, which together with her apparently grudging attitude to his need for constant nursing from her, only served to deepen his depression.

His family had no regular source of income, only occasional handouts from his son Gus Jendra in Denpasar. To supplement these, Jero Rasman had started running a gambling den of sorts. Men from the *banjar* congregated on certain nights, on the none-too-salubrious front verandah of their quarters, the *bale delod* of the houseyard, to gamble at cards. The stakes were not large, perhaps in the range Rp 1,000 to Rp 10,000, the latter being about a day's pay for a good tradesman locally. Uncle Cakra and his wife retained a modest fee as providers of the venue, and cups of sweet, strong, black coffee.

This meagre source of income was however cut off when we arrived; some of the relatives (particularly my mother-in-law, who was quite conservative in such matters) felt that such activity was somehow a little seedy, and inappropriate for a Brahmana *gria* which, although amongst the least opulent of the thirteen *gria* in Sepenan Kaja, did enjoy an unusual religious status⁹ in the local area. Somebody of influence prevailed upon Uncle Cakra and Jero Rasman to wind up their low-key casino activities; possibly it was thought also that the foreign anthropologist might get a poor impression of the place - there was certainly some drinking and rough language at the gambling sessions, more so than there were in similar sessions in the *banjar* meeting-hall, which was much more public and better lit.

Ida Bagus Rata, the author's father-in-law

I suspect that it was my father-in-law who finally brought pressure to bear to curtail the card nights at Gria Suci. Ida Bagus Rata was the younger brother of the late G. A. Cakra, born in 1936 in the *gria* but raised in the capital, where he still lives with his second wife (also a Brahmana) and their four children. My wife Ida Ayu Mediani is his first child by his first wife, a Sudra woman whom he married when they were both very young (by all accounts swept off his feet by her beauty, and without a second thought for status-group endogamy - although, it will be remembered, high-status males have the option of taking brides from any group equal to or below their own in the Triwangsa status hierarchy). At his insistence, I called my father-in-law "Aji" (Triwangsa "father"), as did his own children.

Aji, as noted above, lived in Denpasar, and only visited the *gria* in Gianyar (some 30 kilometres away) for ritual occasions, of which there are quite a few each year, not to mention the more or less spectacular, one-off occasions such as the weddings or funerals of family members. We participated in both, and much other ritual besides, in the year we lived at the *gria*; so much so that I sometimes found myself suffering "ritual overload". The Balinese are renowned in Indonesia for the extent of their ceremonial activity, believed by some outsiders to constitute a hindrance to "development" - because of the observed constant interruptions to the working week, as people return from their urban locations to their villages of origin for the many cyclic and one-off ceremonies. The Bali Post often carried articles and letters debating the issue of the preference by developers (of, say, tourist resorts) to employ labour from outside Bali; aside from the pittance for which such labourers were prepared to work, non-Balinese workers were not subject to these ritual-

driven absences from work. Such ritual¹⁰ is of course more easily integrated with daily work, agricultural or otherwise, for Balinese who remain in the villages.

Aji was typical of many Indonesians of his generation, who had a village background but had long since settled in an urban context, and pursued careers in business or the civil service (or both). The children of these "modernising" pioneers, born and schooled in the city, related of necessity in a more tenuous way to their fathers' natal villages. In Bali, where great emphasis was still placed on the idea of origins and ancestors (the two being of course complementary), city children such as Aji's four teenagers, as well as his five older children from his first marriage, nevertheless still tended to have the importance of regular devotions at their origin shrines inculcated into them from birth. This was effected through the regular visits to the most recent origin shrine (Gria Suci, where we stayed), and also, less frequently, to the much older lineage shrine (*kawitan*), located on the cooler, ideologically auspicious (if tectonically perilous) slopes of the sacred mountain, Gunung Agung.

The fact that Aji lived and worked in the capital, thirty kilometres from Sepenan, clearly meant that he and his family could not take a meaningful part in the day-to-day activities of the village community. As is usual in Bali in such cases, Aji's family was said to *mebanjar* (be a *banjar* community member) at Sepenan Kaja. His name was read out at roll-call at the start of each monthly *banjar* meeting, as if he were still a resident. A small fine is levied for such absentee members, in lieu of voluntary work (*kerja bakti*) done by resident members. Absentee members obviously cannot take part in debates on community issues at the monthly *banjar* meetings; but concerned non-residents can usually have their opinions put forward, normally by proxy via a sympathetic resident member, or perhaps by letter, read out at the meeting.

Many such urban dwellers, at least those first-generation city residents who actually moved there from the countryside, have strong ties to "the village". Their immediate past origin shrines are there, in their natal houseyards; the emphasis on ancestor veneration produces, particularly in the more pious individuals and families, a spiritual orientation far exceeding a simple nostalgia for the place of one's childhood. I would say that Aji and his "second" family exemplified this; they were always very diligent in attendance, and evidently quite pious in their devotions, on ceremonial occasions at the family shrine at Gria Suci.

Jero Ketut, the author's mother-in-law

The same was true for Aji's first wife, my "real" mother-in-law, Jero Ketut Suwiarthi, who was the prime mover in organising the complicated offerings for the many rituals performed at the *gria*. This she did despite having no telephone or personal transport, and despite the onerous duties of the headmistress of a primary school in the capital, where she had lived since her separation from Aji some twenty-six years previously.

Like Aji, Jero Ketut found herself living in an urban community to which she had no ritual ties. She was certainly involved with the surrounding community - she taught the local children, and was a figure of some standing in the district. Because she had never been officially divorced from Aji (wanting, I believe, to maintain her links¹¹ with her five children, in fact raised by her alone after the separation), Jero Ketut was still technically a wife of Aji's, and therefore remained an absentee member of the *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja. In these cases, people with affiliation to distant villages are said to belong to the *banjar adat* (customary/ritual community body) in the village, but to belong to the *banjar dinas* (official/government community body) in whose territory they reside, in the city (Warren, 1993).

Prominent community figures*Ida Bagus Bajra, the deputy village head*

Apart from the actual residents of our houseyard, the first villager I met when we moved into the *gria* was the man holding the records of *banjar* residents, the rubber stamps and government forms, and the other paraphernalia of the state bureaucracy appropriate to the lowest level of Indonesian government administration, in its Balinese variant, that is, the *banjar dinas* just mentioned (in standardised Indonesian administrative terminology, the *dusun*). This man, Ida Bagus Nyoman Bajra (known to all as Gus Oman) held the minor administrative position of *klian dinas* (*klian*: head, leader, elder), the deputy village head for our *banjar*. He received a government stipend of some Rp 60,000 per month, for his part-time work recording births, deaths, marriages, the movement of people into and out of the *banjar* territory, the issue of the universal identity cards (KTP: *Kartu Tanda Penduduk*), and similar administrative duties.

We were required to make a courtesy call on the *klian dinas* on our arrival, to officially register ourselves as residents of the *banjar* community. This we did without delay, presenting the many permits that I had been obliged to collect, in strict sequence, starting from the Immigration and Police head offices in Jakarta, and proceeding, with much sitting for passport-size photographs and even the taking of fingerprints, down the hierarchy of administrative bodies, from national, to province-level (Bali), to district or *kabupaten*-level (Gianyar), to sub-district or *kecamatan*-level (also called Gianyar in our case), to village or *desa*-level (Sepen), and finally to the sub-village, *banjar dinas* level, and the simple office-cum-workshop of our next-door neighbour, the *klian dinas*.

The part-time office of *klian dinas* can be filled by any *banjar* resident prepared to do the job and stand for election or (as often happens) accept the sole nomination of the *banjar* membership. There was some prestige associated with the position, mainly due to the duty of the incumbent to represent *banjar* interests in meetings¹² with the administrative village head (BI *kepala desa*, BB *perbekel*), and due perhaps also to the mixture of awe and aversion with which many villagers view anything to do with *pemerintah*, "the government".

Our *klian dinas*, however, had other claims to status, of a more traditional and locally more cogent nature. As his name shows, he was also a Brahmana, highest of the *kasta* title-groups of the Triwangsa. He was one of three brothers whose families resided in the neighbouring Brahmana houseyard known as Gria Angkatan.

Ratu Pedanda Istri Kania, the resident high priest

Gria Angkatan was unique in the *banjar* (indeed, in the village) in that it had a resident Brahmana high priest or *pedanda* - in fact, the mother of the three men whose families live there. This imposing woman seldom ventured outside her *gria*, living a quite austere life, dressing routinely in a white sarong and sash about her waist, with her white hair (she was in her sixties) tied up in a knot on the crown of the head, in typical *pedanda* style.

More correctly her title was *pedanda istri*; female *pedanda* are not uncommon although outnumbered by males in this vocation. Any wife of a male *pedanda* can also take on priestly duties after due consecration, and such wives often continue in the role after their husbands' deaths, as was the case with the *pedanda istri* in Sepenan Kaja. It is generally believed that such wives are always Brahmana women (so defined in Kersten, 1984:451); but the *pedanda istri* who was our neighbour, a bare-chested, white-haired

mountain of a woman, with lips and teeth perpetually stained a bright orange-red from chewing betel, was in fact from Jero Gede, the nearby high Satria family residence (title: Anak Agung), and told me so herself.

She had married her late husband, a Brahmana man from Sanur, who became a *pedanda* and was subsequently given the land where Gria Angkatan then stood by his wife's family (thereby allowing her to return to her own village to live). She outlived her husband and, since she had herself been ordained a *pedanda*, she still acted as ritual officiant for families from the Sanur area who had historically been *sisia* (established ritual clients) of her late husband's family *gria* there. With her personal links to S, where she grew up, and being also the only *pedanda* in the village, she of course officiated at the public temple anniversary rituals described in Chapter Five, as well as providing *tirta* holy water to any of the villagers who needed it for their own family rituals (and did not have a *sisia* relationship with any other *pedanda*).

Ratu Pedanda Istri Peringalot

Despite the fact that a Brahmana high priest lived literally across the road, officiation at major ritual conducted by my wife's family at Gria Suci was performed by their own *pedanda* (also a woman), who was a relative from that branch of the family which still resided at the lineage origin shrine (*kawitan*) mentioned above, at Peringalot in Karangasem. I mention her here because she was a regular visitor to the *gria*, on "official" duty. As is often the case in Bali, where families can be dispersed all around the island, this priest had to travel considerable distances (Peringalot is about 50 Km from Sepenan) to officiate at family (and other *sisia* clients') ceremonies. Usually, vital offerings (*sajen*) were prepared by the priest's helpers, and accompanied the *pedanda* in a mini-bus to the houseyard (or cemetery) where the ritual took place. This placed quite a strain on the older priests, of whom my wife's family's *pedanda* was an example. It will be noted then that historical or family ties resulted in the frequent necessity to summon high priests from afar, when sometimes (as in our case) there was another *pedanda* resident right next door, who could from a theological viewpoint have easily officiated at the required ritual.

Gung Kak Raka, the Satria patriarch

Anak Agung Gde Raka (known as Gung Kak, the second word being short for *kakiang*, the high-*kasta* version of "grandfather"), a retired civil servant, was the senior member of the high Satria residence known as Jero Gede, located on *banjar* Sepenan Kaja territory. The family were of the Dewa Manggis¹³ royal line, related to the *raja* of Gianyar.

Gung Kak had mixed feelings about Triwangsa/*kasta* status in a rapidly modernising Bali. He would wax lyrical about the grandeur of his family's past, when the nobility "owned" the common people and exercised a life-and-death power over them. This absolute power was of course characterised in terms of the "protective" function of royalty, whereby the warrior-kings of the Satria provided security and protection for their people, in exchange for loyalty (i.e. unpaid support for palace ceremonial and military participation in their overlord's regular quests to conquer neighbouring territories¹⁴).

But Gung Kak also appreciated that times had changed; this was always symbolised for me by the heavy prescription eyeglasses he wore, and his frequent discussions about Western medicine (this was a popular topic amongst many Sepenan Kaja residents, of all backgrounds). He encouraged his nephew, also a resident of Jero Gede, to accept nomination as a candidate for the position of government (*dinas*) village head, in which position he was duly elected (see following Chapter). As a result, the village was once again under the leadership of "the palace" - in a sense. Of course, real power had since Independence resided with the Jakarta-based central government. The office of village head (*kepala desa*) was locally prestigious, and pragmatically influential, because it was the conduit for higher-level government determinations and funding. In Sepenan, the fact that the village head (a "modern", government position) was a scion of a local branch of the former ruling Satria was entirely appropriate, according to Gung Kak. His conviction was summarised as:

Rakyat masih mencari pemimpin ke puri (the people still look to the *puri* - Satria residence - for their leaders)

In fact, it took me a long time to get to this underlying attitude; Gung Kak was sensitive to the egalitarian wind blowing over his island, not to mention official policy against traditional privilege, and preferred to talk about historical times. In formal interviews, his line on political authority was the "correct" one - the national government was the sole authority, and any citizen, regardless of traditional status, could aspire to join its bureaucracy and seek advancement on merit. The above quote slipped out in an

unguarded moment, when he was not carefully choosing his words - betraying, I believe, his true feelings on the matter.

Gung Ngurah, the village head

The Sepenan village head was a young, married Satria man, Anak Agung Ngurah. He was the nephew of Gung Kak Raka; his father had died some years previously. His election as village head is described in the following Chapter. Gung Ngurah was a pleasant, shy man. His duties kept him busy in the *kantor kepala desa* office six days a week, meaning that he had little time to attend the many village and *banjar* ritual events. He told my wife once that he was aware of his reputation as being too "passive" in his official role (essentially, not putting the village's case for increased development funding strongly enough to the district administration), and also paying insufficient attention to ritual matters. He felt trapped between the imperative to perform well in the *dinas*/government administration role, which was so time-consuming, and at the same time to be a prominent representative of the local senior Satria line in *adat*/ritual contexts.

Gus Agung, the sekwilda: man of many parts

A key Brahmana figure residing in the *banjar* provided an example of the combination in one personality of traditional Triwangsa status and the prestige and influence of high government position. Ida Bagus Agung Sudira (Gus Aji Agung) was the patriarch of a spacious *gria*, keeper of several dogs of even worse disposition than the usual Balinese canine standard, in 1993 semi-retired from his after-hours practice as a traditional healer (*balian*), in which capacity he was once an informant for McCauley (1984).

Gus Agung was, however, far from retired in his career in the government administration, where he held the important post of treasurer for the *kabupaten* (district/regency) of Gianyar. All funding for public works, and decisions on the award of tenders to contractors, which villages would have priority for infrastructure improvements, and so on, were handled by him. In the Indonesian bureaucratic context, his position was obviously one of great influence. Although I did on occasion have access to him when at home, I was also sometimes forced to wait my turn to see him, while an interminable queue of supplicants attended his *gria*, with various proposals, seeking his assistance for their projects

On such occasions, if new supplicants arrived while I was waiting, I naturally went to the bottom of the queue - dilettantes such as ethnographers could obviously wait (I imagined his attitude to be), when money matters remained to be discussed. Yet Gus Agung, for all his evident wealth¹⁵ and prestige (as Brahmana, as a high government official, and as a traditional healer), was basically a very shy man, socially maladroit and prone to incurring the antipathy of other villagers, as also will become clearer in following Chapters.

Wayan Sadra, community head of ritual affairs

An important Sudra figure in the *banjar* community was Wayan Sadra, the *klian adat* (head of custom/adat affairs) who lived over the back wall from Gria Suci. His houseyard (*pekarangan* for low-kasta people) was a modest one, housing himself and his two wives, their children and a couple of other relatives. (Balinese men may have multiple wives according to *adat* custom, but this is becoming rare, both because of the expense involved and the increasing unwillingness of first wives to put up with being *dimadu* (BI) - literally "honeeyed", i.e. replaced in their husband's affections by a (usually younger) "honey" or second wife¹⁶, but not divorced). Sadra had a job in the capital, requiring him to commute the thirty kilometres to Denpasar most days. He drove vehicles for a tourism operator. By contrast with this rather ordinary occupation in the wider Balinese context, his position as *klian adat* for the *banjar* was, at least locally, a very prestigious one. He was the foremost figure in organising all the major ritual activities of the *banjar* throughout the year¹⁷, such as public temple anniversaries (*odalan*) and funeral/cremation arrangements for *banjar* members, as well as advising on family ritual events such as weddings, tooth-filings, Balinese "birthdays" (*otonan*), and the like.

I got to know Sadra well over the year that we lived in the *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja, for several reasons. For one thing, we were neighbours. Moreover, there were numerous family ceremonial occasions, large and small, which were held at Gria Suci during that year, and Sadra, as *klian adat*, was frequently involved in directing the course of these rituals (extending as long as ten days at a time). And, since all of the public, *banjar* rituals (and those whole-village rituals for which the *banjar* was responsible¹⁸) required vast amounts of money - as a demonstration of the piety of the community, and insurance against divine wrath and subsequent misfortune - Sadra was engaged in almost constant fund-raising. It often seemed to me that this was his main function. Every time a major ritual loomed in the calendar, we (and every other houseyard in the *banjar*) would get a

visit from the erstwhile *klian adat*, duly clad in informal *adat* attire (sarong replacing trousers), seeking a contribution.

Cash was preferred. After a while, I could recognise the particular look on his face when he came into the *gria* in fund-raising mode. As I was the only inhabitant with any money (at Gria Suci), Sadra and I would go through our own little ritual on the front verandah. There was a pleasant exchange of social niceties, after which he would casually mention the upcoming temple ceremony, or whatever, and bemoan the massive expenditure required, and the parlous state of *banjar* finances. That was my cue to volunteer a relatively substantial contribution (in the range of Rp 20,000 - Rp 50,000). My wife was a valuable source of guidance in these matters, as to what was a reasonable amount to offer. Too little would be insulting and unsociable of me - after all, I was a foreigner rich enough to fly to Bali and live for a year without visible means of support - but equally, too much would be what Balinese call *belog ajum* (showing off), and could be embarrassing for many other *banjar* members, who could not afford a large contribution. Perhaps to ensure that everybody contributed according to their means, details of these contributions were publicly announced at *banjar* meetings. The ever-present sanctions of malicious gossip and public humiliation were risked by anybody who sought to evade their communal-religious obligations.

Sadra's predecessor as *klian adat*, also a "commoner" (non-Triwangsa) and also elected by the *banjar* constituency, was impeached for misappropriation of *banjar* funds collected by him in the course of his duties. This former *klian adat* regularly attended *banjar* meetings while I was there, where he took pleasure in throwing up difficult questions on *adat* and even financial matters - apparently to see the present incumbent squirm with embarrassment when caught out in ignorance of some detail of ritual or procedure. This in spite of the disgrace in which he left the position himself. I formed the impression that whatever shame he may have felt as a result of his impeachment was more due to being caught than to being guilty of misuse of community funds, moreover funds of a largely sacral nature. I was told that the *banjar* even gave him a further term in office, after his misconduct was discovered, in the hope that he would make good the shortfall if given a chance to redeem himself.

He did not. When we left the village, he was embroiled in another scandal, this time over his use of a crude (*kasar*) term for "people" (*jelma*) in reference to other *banjar* members during a meeting. Such language was quite taboo in that context. Formal statements by witnesses were taken, the village head of customary affairs (*bendesa adat*, whole-village equivalent of the *klian adat*) became involved, and deliberations began as to whether a simple fine would be sufficient punishment for his breach of decorum, or

whether a purification rite was indicated. Ultimately he did sponsor a small purification ceremony, underscoring in the process the religious character of the *banjar* community.

Made Rai

Made Rai was a Sudra man in his late thirties, a university graduate in law, who had played a major role in preparing the paperwork prior to the legal establishment of Sepenan as an official *dinas* village in 1989. He was a candidate for election as village head, but lost to Gung Ngurah. He was subsequently appointed as village secretary, a position from which he was sacked in 1993, in peculiar circumstances related at least in part to his (at that time) unorthodox political leanings (see Chapter Five).

Mangku Dalem, the low-kasta temple priest

This vital member of the community was mentioned in Chapter One, but cannot be omitted from this list of Sepenan Kaja notables. Around 70 years of age, he was still active in 1993-94, officiating at public ritual at the *pura dalem* death temple (as described in Chapter Five), of which he was caretaker, as well as conducting a plethora of minor rituals at family life cycle ceremonies. He was also a *balian* shamanic healer, conducting seances for people whose maladies were thought to have supernatural causes.

His prowess as a masseur was also well-known; he employed an unusual technique (which I saw him use on my wife), using his feet, rather than hands, to massage the patient. This was an extraordinary departure from Balinese body language norms, whereby the feet are very "impure" parts of the body - not even to be pointed at somebody else when one is sitting, let alone rubbed on them. Furthermore, the *pemangku* was a low-*kasta* man (albeit a "holy man"), and my wife was a (Kemenuh) Brahmana, with the highest *kasta* status.

The explanation for this apparent breach of both general behavioural norms and *kasta* proprieties was as follows. It was only my wife's legs that were sore and required massaging on that occasion. His status as a priest, ritually raised in purity at his *mewinten* ordination ceremony, precluded the *pemangku* from touching anyone else's feet - whatever their *kasta* status. The scene of my wife lying on the *bale* floor at the '*manku*'s house, while he massaged her legs with his feet, nicely illustrated the fact that the *kasta*

elite did not have a monopoly on ideologically-based purity. It was the "people's priest", not my Brahmana wife, who was in danger of defilement in that context.

Banjar rank and file members

Dayu Tu Suwati

Ida Ayu Putu Suwati was an unmarried, middle-aged Brahmana woman who was taking care of the young son and daughter of her brother, who had died of tuberculosis, and his wife, who spent most of her time selling small offerings in the market. Dayu Tu had also caught TB, but had undergone the required course of medication and had been pronounced cured. As a senior woman in a household without adult males, she was in effect a "family head" (*kepala keluarga*, or simply KK) and, being an intelligent and strong-minded person, attended the monthly *banjar* meetings and put forward her opinions in no uncertain manner. She was the only female that I ever saw at *banjar* meetings, which were in practice all-male affairs (a family head was the usual representative of the houseyard, and family heads were always male - except in Dayu Tu's case).

She was an almost daily visitor to our houseyard, as she had a close relationship with both Jero Rasman and my wife. She was a valuable informant. Little that went on in the *banjar* escaped her notice - partly because she ran a daily card game at her house, where neighbours gambled and gossiped, their tongues loosened by *tuak* palm beer. Dayu Tu often relayed this gossip to us during her morning visits. She had strong opinions on any issue that we raised with her - including the matter of *kasta* status and its place in village society. She was far from an apologist for the principle of hereditary hierarchy, but at the same time appreciated the group solidarity benefits of *kasta* status-group membership. She saw this as additional to, definitely not in place of, the communal solidarity enjoyed by all *banjar* members, regardless of status ranking.

Nyoman Pande

This middle-aged man was the senior family head of a small Pande *dadia*, a group of three compounds housing the families of five agnatically related members of the Pande

title-group. This local group of Pande were the only *banjar* members to employ a Pande high priest (*empu* - he lived in Denpasar) and holy water prepared by this priest for their family ritual - rather than a Brahmana *pedanda* high priest.

The religious separatism of this practice was not carried over into the realm of *banjar* community solidarity, however. Nyoman Pande was a keen supporter of the *banjar* community. He attended monthly *banjar* meetings without fail, and took an active role in both the ritual and secular affairs of the community. He seemed to be on very good terms with Gus Oman, the *klian dinas* and son of the *banjar*'s resident *pedanda*. In his view, the issue of his group's unorthodox (from the *kasta* viewpoint) religious practices was a family affair and had no bearing on the group's devotion to the *banjar* community ethos.

Putu Wena and Nyoman Tilem

These two Sudra *banjar* members were brother and sister, in their late thirties in 1993. They had had a long relationship with my wife's family. Tilem had often looked after my wife's younger siblings when they were staying at the *gria* in earlier years, and her brother Wena was a regular visitor, frequently helping out around the compound - particularly on ritual occasions.

Tilem was the most diligent helper whenever some ceremony was being held at the *gria* (a frequent occurrence while we were living there). She was able to cook vast quantities of food and serve it to guests, day and night, seemingly without sleep. She had also been, for some years, a *pembantu* (maid) at the home of Gus Jendra, my wife's cousin, son of the late Gus Aji Cakra. Tilem saw herself as "attached" to the family; she was always welcome to stay at the *gria* for as long as she pleased.

Wena had a job cooking at a hotel in one of the tourist centres, but was always available to help out at the *gria*. He had a small but important role at the wedding of Dewi, my sister-in-law - a role which strongly emphasised the status gap between the high-*kasta* bride and Sudra people like himself. At one point, dressed in his best *adat* traditional costume, Wena physically carried the bride on one of his broad shoulders. The status implications of this are raised in Chapter Six, where the wedding is described.

The relationship of this brother and sister to my wife's extended family, represented by the *gria*, was close to that of a *parekan* (retainer). When Wena was short of money, especially to buy medicine, he would approach one of the family, in an even more

deferential manner than usual, and ask for it. His exaggerated deference was not the same as a Western-style embarrassment; because he had an established relationship with the family, he was entitled to make such approaches. The great status differential involved, which he accepted as a fact of life, required his deference. His sister, whose personality was far more extroverted and robust, was never particularly deferential in speech and body language to family members (but always observed the language register norms). Nevertheless, she laboured tirelessly at every family ritual occasion. High-status families hardly needed to employ servants when domestic assistance was willingly forthcoming from Sudra people who sought a *parekan* relationship with them. Of course, money was slipped to Wena and Tilem on a regular basis, but it was understood that these were not wages paid to hired help - it was a matter of patronage.

Dewa Sumpang, civil servant

A cheerful man in his mid-thirties, Dewa Sumpang lived with his extended family in a large compound across the road from our *gria*. His title (Dewa) was (in that part of Bali, at least) that of a Satria not related closely to the ruling houses of the district. The latter used the title Anak Agung in that part of Gianyar, and Cokorda in the Ubud area. Dewa Sumpang worked as a middle-level civil servant in Gianyar town, for what he said was a totally inadequate wage. He was also active in *banjar* affairs, acting as part-time assistant to the *klian dinas*, Gus Oman, and acting as secretary for the *banjar*. He recorded proceedings at *banjar* meetings, which were chaired by the *klian adat*, Wayan Sadra.

Desak Sulatri, small business woman

Dewa Sumpang's wife was Desak Sulatri, a charmingly ebullient woman who owned a *warung* (small general store and coffee bar), situated at the front of their house, and only a few paces from our *gria*'s entrance. She worked hard and kept long hours (from 5 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. every day), earning more income than her civil servant husband. They were able to refurbish their house, but - like virtually all other *banjar* member families - could not afford to buy a car. Like her husband, and the other members of the extended family living in that houseyard (that is, Dewa Sumpang's two brothers and their families), Desak 'Latri was wholehearted in her support of village and *banjar* ritual. She hated to lose trade, but nevertheless always closed the *warung* when an important ceremony was being held, so that she could take part.

Made Regeg

The old-fashioned given name betrays the age of Pak 'De Regeg, husband of my wife's aunt on her father's side, Biang Oman. This retired military man was in his sixties when we arrived in Sepenan. He was a frequent visitor to Gria Suci, having a good relationship with the family, despite the fact that his marriage thirty years previously to Aji's sister was a breach of *kasta* endogamy. Their five daughters, therefore, were Sudra/*jaba* people. Pak De was diligent in attending any life cycle ritual held at Gria Suci, where his knowledge of sacred ritual chanting (*mekidung*) was put to good use. He performed this service when I had my teeth filed prior to the low-key *adat* wedding that my wife and I had while staying at the *gria*. The good relations between his family and the Brahmana *gria* from which he had "taken" his high-*kasta* wife showed that *kasta* endogamy was an ideal that was not necessarily enforced. He was a prominent member of the Manikan, a lesser-known Sudra title-group, described in the following Chapter.

Wayan Dastra, builder

This young married man from the northwest *tempek* (quarter of the *banjar*) was hired to rebuild the house that we were to occupy in the *gria* compound. Although low-*kasta*, he showed a distinct lack of the usual deference paid to high-*kasta* people (especially in their own houseyard) when dealing with my wife. He did use the appropriate language register in conversation with her (I have never seen that convention ignored), but his demeanour indicated condescension. He clearly resented our attempts to check his claimed expenditure on materials and wages to labourers.

As I got to know him better in the following months, he gave me the impression that he did not approve of the whole *kasta* system of ascribed social rank. He never said so directly - I was, after all, closely associated with a Brahmana family, and direct criticism of the *kasta* system to me, if reported, could have earned him the ire of an influential section of the *banjar* community (there were thirteen Brahmana *gria* in *banjar* Sepenan Kaja alone). Of course, there was also no certainty that these Brahmana families would act in concert against an outspoken critic of *kasta*. But there were indications of such high-*kasta* solidarity in the *banjar*, in the form of a Brahmana-only group called the *patus* Brahmana, described in the following Chapter. It was therefore almost impossible for me to collect any opinions directly critical of *kasta* social hierarchy from Sudra people in the fieldwork village. I did hear plenty of such criticism in other parts of the island, and from Balinese I met in Australia. It is unlikely that similar views were not held by at least a proportion of

Sepenar villagers also. Since people would not express such dissension verbally, other clues had to be sought. The best indicators of dissent appeared to be the willingness or otherwise of *banjar* members to attend the life cycle ceremonies of high-*kasta* families; this is discussed further in Chapter Six.

Wealth distribution among *banjar* households

I have mentioned that *banjar* Sepenar Kaja contained thirteen Brahmana households or *gria*. These Brahmana households exhibited the full range of prosperity and influence in local and wider-scale affairs. Apart from the large *gria* of Gus Agung, the powerful district secretary, and that of Gus Nyoman Bajra (Gus Oman), the *klian dinas*, and his mother, the only *pedanda* high priest in Sepenar, the remaining *gria* housed Brahmana families with diverse occupations and levels of affluence. The northernmost *gria* was that of the absentee *banjar* member Dr Ida Bagus Karangasem, known locally as Gus Aji Dokter, after his profession as gynaecologist. This *gria* boasted attractive buildings and manicured grounds, maintained by local staff, including an unemployed Brahmana.

The young Brahmana man who looked after this luxurious *gria* was the younger brother of Gus Aji Indra, a hard-working, taciturn and (for me) inaccessible near neighbour, whom I met at every ceremonial occasion but could never engage in conversation beyond the minimal niceties that Indonesians call *basa basi*. The *gria* of these brothers, in sharp contrast to those of Gus Aji Dokter and of Gus Aji Agung (the *sekwilda*), was best described by the Indonesian epithet *sangat sederhana*, a phrase that applies to housing of a very basic standard. The brothers and their families survived on a subsistence income derived from working other people's rice fields, tending cows, and on the retainer for the younger brother's caretaker duties at the doctor's *gria*.

The income disparity between these poor Brahmana and their wealthy Brahmana neighbours underscores the lack of consistent correlation between traditional high status (Triwangsa membership) and material wealth. Another local example was Gus Buruan, a frequent visitor to our *gria*, who was supporting a wife and two of his four children (the other two having been placed with relatives who could better afford to raise them) on his wages of Rp 2,000 (at the time, SUS 1) per day. Their lifestyle was borderline subsistence, where such necessities as a trip to the doctor were in the luxury category.

The residents of the Satria *puri* Jero Gede were relatively wealthy, in that they owned several hectares of ricefields, which they leased to sharecroppers. The *puri* had once owned much more land, I was told, but most of it had been sold over the past three decades. Dayu Tu Suwati said that this was largely because of the gambling losses of one member of the family. Jero Gede was a large property, and the extended family owned two vehicles and several motorcycles.

No other Satria families in the *banjar* were at all wealthy, although one or two were relatively well off, with compound buildings in good repair, regularly repainted, etc. Dewa Sumpang's family houseyard was in this category. Most families had at least one motorcycle; these were relatively expensive (around Rp 2 million) but considered vital for family transportation. Cars - even quite old ones in poor condition - were prohibitively expensive for most families.

Sudra *banjar* member families showed a similar wealth distribution. One family had been very successful in the tourist industry and owned a Kijang car, which was the envy of all their neighbours. This family kept to themselves, which (along with the fact that they were rich by local standards) ensured that they acquired a reputation for being *sombong* (snobbish, arrogant). However, they took care to fulfil their duty as *banjar* members - attending the monthly meetings and participating in the weekly working bees. Failure to do so would have put their *banjar* membership at risk - an awful prospect, as exclusion from the *banjar* community meant that no-one would conduct the funeral of any family member who died (Warren, 1993:47).

Other Sudra *banjar* member families ranged from moderately comfortable to just above subsistence level. Civil service wages were low, but regular. Goldsmiths made good money, but it was irregular. Tenant farming was not lucrative. Those with a foothold in the tourist industry seemed to be better off - even if they were only drivers or cooks.

Overall, there was no significant correlation between wealth and status in the village. This needs to be qualified, however. The Satria *puri* families still had inherited property, representing the residue of the large holdings of land and buildings that their princely forebears possessed. The two largest and wealthiest Brahmana *gria* belonged to men who were "modern sector" professionals - one a doctor, the other an economist and high-ranking civil servant. The status of their parents was a factor in the access of these two men to tertiary education. Gus Agung's father was a senior civil servant under the Dutch colonial administration, which tended to employ Balinese of high traditional status (Vickers, 1989:133). Gus Aji Karangasem's father was a senior executive in a government bank. Both men attributed their entrance to university to their fathers' influence. In their cases (and doubtless many others), traditional status was probably an important factor in

ensuring privileged access to higher education¹⁹, which in turn was a potential route to wealth.

However, this principle had to be modified to allow for individual capacity to benefit from such access. High-*kasta* individuals were as prone as anyone else to gambling and other forms of dissoluteness, thereby squandering any privileged entry they might have had to the higher socio-economic strata. There were several high-*kasta* men in Sepenan Kaja who were constant losers at cock-fights, including one of my affines.

Membership of a status-group or a "commoner" title-group, for that matter, did confer the advantage of a large network of "relatives", which greatly increased the possibility of members finding employment in an organisation managed by another group member (Boon, 1977:175; Guernonprez, 1987:150; C. Geertz, 1963). This was illustrated also by my father-in-law's practice of employing mainly Brahmana people from the *banjar* in the two art shops that he formerly owned in Mas. His reason for this was "to avoid shame being brought on us by having unemployed Brahmana men hanging around the *banjar*". Such corporatism was however not the sole preserve of high-*kasta* groups; both the Pasek Kayu Selem and Pasek Pulosari title-groups in the *banjar* had members working for clan "relatives" in the southern tourist industry. Both high and low-*kasta* people found that networking based on traditional clan membership was an effective strategy to wealth acquisition and distribution.

The foregoing vignettes will hopefully allow the reader a deeper appreciation of the various activities outlined in the following Chapters, through some familiarity with the backgrounds and relative status positions of the individuals described. The following Chapter will examine more closely Balinese concepts of group identity involving both hierarchical status and hereditary non-*kasta* title-group status, as played out in the fieldwork community. Subsequent Chapters will examine the tension between this group status, as variously perceived by status-group members, and the fundamentally incompatible ideology of egalitarianism characterising the communalist values of village and *banjar* solidarity.

Notes

¹ Here I differ with Swellengrebel's earlier impression, that "the *desa* is the chief social unit on Bali" (1960:11). In Sepenan, people definitely felt strongest affiliation to their *banjar*, which after all comprised their physically nearest neighbours, numbering between 700 - 1,000 individuals (which is stretching the limits of acquaintanceship in any case). The *desa* is more of an "imagined community" (to slightly misapply Anderson (1983)) in the two commonplace senses of a) the ritual village or *desa adat*, which supports the standard three-temple set already mentioned, and b) the political/demographic unit or *desa dinas*, upon which, through its village head and secular institutions (LMD, LKMD), the whole hierarchy of the national government impinges.

² Perhaps "history" should be added to this list of causative factors for local variations in supposedly general Balinese practices. In this case, historical shifts in village boundaries with the growth of population settlement to the south, and abandonment of settled areas to the north, has left the *pura dalem* in a physically central location in the present village layout, a position that was in fact once in the south (*kelod*) quarter of an earlier settlement pattern. Subsequent to these changes, the former village temples (*pura puseh* and *p. desa*) were rebuilt on available land within the newer village layout - and this happened to be further south than the existing *pura dalem*. The replaced temples were "decommissioned" and abandoned.

³ Again, this concentration was the result of intervention by the Gianyar *raja* earlier this century; I was told that a royal edict decreed that the *kasta* representation in the settlement should reflect the *kaja/klod* high/low hierarchical dichotomy. That is, the Brahmana should all live in the most *kaja banjar* of the village (SK), the Satria in the next highest/most *kaja banjar*, and so on. The distribution remains today, more or less. The Satria *puri* Jero Gede was just within SK territory, on the S Tengah boundary; the other *puri*, Jero Tengah, was on ST land, and most of the lesser Satria (Dewa/Desak) indeed lived in ST, while the residents of S Klod and the even more *klod*/southernmost *banjar*, Cabaang, were virtually all Sudra people.

⁴ Such cases were not uncommon. My wife's patrilineal aunt, Biang Oman, was reportedly not spoken to by the family for months after she ran off and married a commoner. Made Regeg, described later in this Chapter. Reconciliation came after their first child was born. Two girls from the Satria residence Jero Gede (title: Anak Agung) married commoners, as did one daughter of Gus Agung, the Gianyar district secretary, also described in this Chapter. All of the young men in question were reportedly subject to fairly active dissuasion, although none were actually beaten up, as far as I know. In a contrasting case where I knew the protagonists well, an Anak Agung man from Denpasar who was seeing a low-*kasta* woman (who eventually moved in with him) was roughed up by her brothers in an attempt to break up the relationship. Her family apparently disapproved of his character and/or his "left-leaning" political views (he was an NGO activist, in a country where political activity can be dangerous - his own father was a victim of the "anti-communist" pogrom of 1965-66). In this case, his *kasta* status as a high-level Satria man evidently failed to count for much with the young woman's family.

⁵ To retain the houseyard in the family, my father-in-law had to pay a nominal monthly "fine" to the *banjar* (*meligae*: to "buy the work" that he should have done in person around the *banjar* in cooperation with other members). The family also had to keep the *gria* in good order and return to observe all the necessary family rites and *banjar* and village rituals, as though they were still living there.

⁶ The proviso here is that low-*kasta* women are generally encouraged to marry status superiors, should such matches arise, except in the cases of certain especially endogamy-conscious groups, e.g. the "Marketside East" low-*kasta dadia* group studied by Boon (1977) See also footnote 4.

⁷ Because brides are leaving not only the living relatives but the whole raft of ancestors too; but they can usually return if divorced (Boon, 1977:95-96).

⁸ My brother-in-law, Gus De, caught a neighbour - also a Brahmana - scaling the *gria* fence en route to a midnight tryst one night. After checking the man's eyes to confirm that he was not in fact a witch (*leyak* - cf. Wikan 1990), Gus De said, he admonished the interloper not for his nocturnal mission as such, but for the fact that it could bring shame on the Brahmana *gria* and the high-status family attached to it.

⁹ A small, simply-carved god-seat (*pelinggih*) just inside the houseyard entrance, and for that matter in a technically inauspicious siting within the houseyard layout, had nevertheless a special place in local ritual observances, frequently visited with offerings by neighbours. The owners of the nearby general store (*waring*) did so on a daily basis. The overgrown vacant land across the back fence was considered the haunt of many dangerous *buta* and *kala* spirits, who had to be appeased.

¹⁰ There was some sympathy among Balinese with the view that the panopoly of ritual obligations need to be "rationalised", and the official religious body oversighting Hindu matters, the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, had issued pronouncements to this effect. There was also a view that Balinese religious ceremonial was at the core of Balinese identity, which was a crucial issue for many people in the present era of enormous pressures tending to alter that identity, notably from unfettered tourism "development" and the influx of non-Balinese labourers, hawkers, prostitutes, etc accompanying it.

These newcomers were mostly Muslim, sometimes Christian, and sometimes openly contemptuous of Balinese religious beliefs and practices. During our stay, there was a rash of thefts in our own and neighbouring villages. Some of the thefts were by grave-robbers and, even worse, from the local point of view, by temple-robbers, who took such precious relics as gilded *pratima* (icons of great devotional significance to villagers) from shrines in village temples. Some of these crimes, in the Ubud district, were said to have been exacerbated by the thieves' leaving taunting notes in place of the looted treasures, to the effect that the local Balinese were too stupid to ever be able to prevent such thefts. Such contempt for local beliefs brought people to a state of anger whereby they were ready to kill suspected or proven thieves on the spot; this indeed happened on a couple of occasions in 1993, in Ubud.

¹¹ The Balinese norm is for the children of divorced parents to affiliate with the father, thereby remaining in the houseyard where they were born - the divorced mother usually returns to her own natal houseyard. From the perspective of status, this practice also avoids the outcome whereby high-status children could find themselves being raised in a low-status houseyard, should they follow their (low-status) mother back to her natal residence after a divorce. Interestingly, in the case of my mother-in-law, this is exactly what happened; when she had to separate from her husband (Aji) in favour of his new wife, Jero Ketut retained custody of the five children of the marriage, and raised them herself in the modest accommodations provided for her as principal of the primary school where they lived after the separation. Because there was no divorce (and Balinese men may still, legally and according to *adat* custom, have more than one wife), the children were able to stay with their (low-caste) mother, without violating either the overall principle that children belong to the father's line (cf *purusa* above), or the additional, status-conscious principle that high-status children may not affiliate with the family of a low-status mother (who, after actual divorce, is indeed "re-absorbed" into her father's lineage).

¹² Notably meetings of the LMD and LKMD village councils, where matters such as the allocation of government development funding were thrashed out (cf. Warren, 1993:242-244).

¹³ See Mahaudiana (1968:108, appendix 3,4), a version of the *Babad Manggis Gianjar*, for a genealogy.

¹⁴ As portrayed, in ideological terms, in C. Geertz (1980), and in more prosaic terms in other works, e.g. Schulte Nordholt (1996).

¹⁵ He was able, apparently on a government salary, to complete a large, two-storey extension to his house while we were in the village. He employed other local Brahmana, including our neighbour, the *klian dinas* mentioned above, who told me that the project cost some Rp 100 million (US\$ 50,000 then), a huge sum for most Balinese.

¹⁶ In Sadra's case, his two wives did seem to genuinely get along well together. They had a successful division of labour, whereby the elder wife assisted her husband in organising *adat* matters, and the second wife earned significant income selling vegetables at the Gianyar market. My observations suggest that such domestic harmony in polygamous marriages is rare.

¹⁷ The Balinese ritual calendar is a cycle of 210 days. Hence, most cyclical events, such as temple anniversaries, take place every 210 days.

¹⁸ Notably the anniversary of the village temple of the dead (*pura dalem*), which is located on *banjar* territory, and has its ritual organised by the *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja. As one of the three pan-village temples, such annual ritual is of course attended by the whole village.

¹⁹ Even in 1993, the yearbook of Udayana University (the major state university in Bali) showed a disproportionate number of high-*kasta* graduates: (by faculty) economics: 20%, medicine: 25%, law: 30%, tourism: 20%, and arts: 30%. The *kasta* groups represent only some 10% of the population.

Chapter Four. *Soroh*: the Value of Group Identity

Difference and the Salience of Clan Membership

The Balinese term *soroh* has the taxonomic connotation of "kind", "type", or perhaps "species". It can refer to animals or plants; Guermonprez, writing on the Pande Balinese title-group (1987:54), gives the example of mangoes forming a *soroh* as opposed to, say, papayas; both are fruit, but different kinds. In the field of human social divisions in Bali, *soroh* denotes a nominal descent group of wider scope than that established through specific lineages and local or relatively recent origin points (*kawitan*).

Such *soroh* are the named clans of the "commoner" title-groups (Pasek, Pande, etc) and of the "noble" or *kasta* status-groups (Brahmana, Satria and Wesia), familiar from their introduction in Chapter One. Members of a given *soroh* recognise that they have something in common with other members, much as members of, say, the Scottish clan MacDonald scattered around the world might acknowledge a common origin in Scotland in the distant past - while not claiming "to be related" in any immediately significant way. The analogy between *soroh* and "clan" seems a reasonable one, with the difference that, in the Balinese case, the clan name is not passed on patrilineally as a formal part of the individual's name - as is the surname "MacDonald" in the above example.

However, within the many *soroh* groups in Bali, the fact of membership in the particular clan is certainly passed on (also patrilineally) to offspring - along with varying degrees of group pride, ranging from a vague awareness of the historical background of the *soroh*, to a militant activism in promoting the interests (and sometimes, status ambitions) of the clan within Balinese society.

Balinese use of the term *soroh* is recorded by Hobart (1979:314, 333), Guermonprez (1987:54 *passim*), and Howe (1989:49, 54). Guermonprez's definition (1987:54) is the most succinct: *soroh* is "l'ensemble le plus inclusif des parents en ligne agnatique", that is, the most inclusive agnatic kin group. Warren (1993:7) equates the term with *dadia* (Geertz and Geertz, 1975:4 *passim*), which refers to a corporate descent group as in Guermonprez's definition. *Dadia* groups however need not be groups claiming membership of a Triwangsa/*kasta* status-group or a Sudra title-group. *Soroh*, on the other hand, according to my informants, does connote such a group. Duff-Cooper's (1993:136) analysis of Guermonprez's (ibid.) usage has *soroh* as denoting an archetypal Balinese kinship concept - fundamentally one of egalitarian "difference", upon which the

relatively recent arrival of the Majapahit invasion imposed the *kasta* hierarchy of status. The term certainly seems to cover a wider scope of related people (similar in meaning to "clan") than the *dadia*. The latter, as treated in Geertz and Geertz (1975), seems to connote a much more localised and corporate entity.

Stuart-Fox (1987:137) acknowledges the recently increasing adoption of the alternative term *warga*, also denoting a "maximal descent group". Hence *warga* appears to have the same meaning as *soroh*. However, Pitana (1996), himself an active member of a Pasek title-group clan¹, shows that the *warga* are quite modern associations formed to promote the welfare and, especially, group identity of members of the (relatively ancient) *soroh* clans. Thus, the alternative term *warga* has "modern" connotations, exemplified by central committees which issue membership cards (Pitana, 1996:8). Furthermore, the *warga* organisations described by Pitana are notably *jaba* (non-*kasta*) groups, evidently with a distinct anti-*kasta*, status-levelling (but not status-abolishing) ethos. Hence:

Among *warga* that are categorised as *jaba*, the ideology to topple the caste hierarchy and replace it with the concept of 'difference' is clearly a strong motivation in organising the *warga* (1996:30).

Clan members may or may not be involved in the activities of their relevant *warga* organisations. Members may well be scattered all over Bali, often having no known forebears in common², except for the legendary apical ancestor(s) who founded their *soroh*. As a rule, the originating ancestor, and perhaps just as importantly, the presumed origin-point of the clan, is venerated at the origin-temple (*kawitan*) of the clan. Members of the *soroh* feel an obligation to attend this temple each year during its *odalan* anniversary celebrations, regardless of how far away they may be living. All of the *kasta* and the major non-*kasta soroh* clans have also ensured that their particular clans are represented at the Balinese "mother temple", Pura Besakih, by clan shrines (*pedarman*; see Stuart-Fox, 1982) of widely varying opulence - reflecting both the affluence and the piety, not to mention group pride, of clan members³.

At the local, village or urban neighbourhood level, a given *soroh* clan may be represented by a single extended family houseyard only, and its residents may well make very little of their clan membership in their daily interactions with other villagers. On the other hand, a clan may have a substantial representation in the village - consisting of several or many houseyards agnatically linked - and members may assert a strong sense of belonging and pride in their membership in the wider, named clan. This was true for members of three such *soroh* clans in Sepenan, as described further below.

In fact, agnatically linked groups of houseyards may arise over time in a given locality and develop a strong corporate identity, but without necessarily belonging to any

clan group; these are the *dadia* kin groups studied by Geertz and Geertz (1975), mentioned above. Typically, members of such corporate kin groups are active locally, promoting the good name and reputation of the *dadia*, and the prosperity of its members. But members of local *dadia* who can claim affiliation with a clan, a named *soroh*, can thereby lay claim to an augmented identity - as one of the Pasek, the Pande, or (in the case of the *kasta* status-groups) the Brahmana, the Satria, and so on.

Membership in such groups seemed to me to be an important part of the identity of many Balinese from all walks of life - whether they were "card-carrying" members of the activist *warga* clan organisations or not. I met hundreds of Balinese, at my fieldsite and elsewhere in Bali. And because of my research interests, I made a practice of enquiring (discreetly)⁴ as to the *soroh* affiliation of anyone whom I could engage in conversation. Very few people flatly stated that they had no such affiliations. Most informants valued the fact of their belonging to a distinct, named group with a particular stake - about the details of which they may have known very little - in the grand unfolding of Balinese history. Other people were proud, even militant, members of what they considered eminently prestigious *soroh*. Pitana (mentioned above), and Nyoman Pande and Made Regeg, from Sepenan, were cases in point.

The more militant *soroh* members tended to know something of the history and reputed genealogy of the *soroh*, the names of which are often evocative of origin points, mystical beginnings, or prestigious occupations.

Hence, for example, a person from the "commoner" majority (*jaba*/Sudra/non-*kasta*), in asserting his or her identity as a Pasek, is often, in effect, declaring "I am not one of the *kasta* (Triwangsa) elite but I belong to a prestigious title-group nonetheless". This hypothetical person would be prepared for the query "*Pasek apa?*", that is, "Which particular clan of the Pasek?". The answer would be one of the several Pasek clans - Pasek Sapta Rsi, Pasek Gelgel, P. Kayu Selelem, P. Pulosari, etc. The last three were represented in Sepenan. The title Pasek is associated with hereditary village office-holders in pre-Majapahit Bali (Goris, 1984b:92-3), from which origins Pasek status-groups have existed up to the present day among so-called Bali Aga (minimally Hindu-Javanised) minority populations (Guermonprez, 1987:100, n.23; Danandjaya, 1980:272). Among the wider population, the title also has connotations of appointed rank as scribe or lesser administrative assistant to royal courts in historical times. Noteworthy ancestors who held such appointments sometimes founded Sudra "dynasties", the granted⁵ title of Pasek becoming a hereditary one, with descendants in an ongoing patron-client relationship with the royal court in question (Boon, 1977:72ff).

A less prominent title-group with a similar historical background is the Bendesa (Boon, 1977:161; Goris, 1984b:92). This is still the title of the office of the guardian of customary *adat* law at the village level in Sepenan and other southern plains villages (i.e. the *bendesa adat*; the corresponding secular village leader is the *perbekel* or (BI) *kepala desa*, a civil servant, albeit an elected one - both officials have deputies in each *banjar* of the village, respectively the *klian adat* and the *klian dinas*). However, there is no necessary correlation between occupying the position of *bendesa adat* and membership in the Bendesa title-group. The *bendesa adat* in Sepenan, for example, was an Anak Agung of the high Satria *kasta* group. Outside Sepenan, I have met several Balinese who claim affiliation with the Bendesa clan. The dean of the economics faculty at Bali's Udayana University showed his clan membership by his given name (Dr I K G Bendesa) - an occasional practice among the non-*kasta* title-groups (cf. Nyoman Pande from Sepenan Kaja).

The other high-profile "commoner" title-group in Bali is the Pande, the title signifying a metalworking artisan, an occupation with connotations of the mysterious and the magically dangerous, as noted in Chapter One. This clan has the major subdivisions of Pande Mas (Pande from Kamasan, an ancient centre of goldsmithing), Pande Besi ("workers of iron"), and Pande Bratan ("Pande from Lake Bratan") (Guermonprez, 1987:26). This latter author studied several groups of Pande, including a group of Pande Besi still resident in Sepenan. Most families in this group lived in Sepenan Kelod, but five families (originally from Sepenan Kelod) had migrated to S. Kaja, my fieldsite. I discuss these local representatives of the Pande title-group further below.

Kasta: Adding Hierarchy to Difference

Conventional wisdom among activists representing the interests of one or another of the Sudra (*jaba*, non-*kasta*) title-groups has it that these groups are not concerned with seeking to impose any hierarchical ranking, of any sort of ritual or social honour, amongst the various title-groups (Pitana, op. cit.; Wiana and Santeri, 1993). The *kasta* status-groups, on the other hand, are in general quite concerned with maintaining a social hierarchy in which the *kasta* groups as a whole (the "three elite peoples" or Triwangsa) are inherently superior to the non-*kasta* majority (Goris, 1984a:293-294; Vickers, 1989:150). This is perceived as arrogance by some Sudra title-group activists; for *kasta* group members, it certainly adds the spice of inherent superiority to the satisfaction of belonging to a distinct, named title-group within society.

In an earlier chapter I attempted to show that the ultimate ideological basis for the claimed status of not only the Triwangsa/*kasta* but also the named Sudra groups is the claim of descent from illustrious apical ancestors who in turn derived their high status from the fact that they were Brahmanic priests. That is, the status of these various groups, *kasta* and non-*kasta* alike, rests ultimately upon the archetypically hierarchical Hindu cosmological model.

This, as I have stated, renders the claimed adherence of some non-*kasta* title-groups to radically egalitarian sentiments highly dubious. The *kasta* groups, since their rise to pre-eminence in fourteenth-century Bali, have self-consciously (and of course self-interestedly) imposed a clearly hierarchical model of society, with themselves at the apex. But Bali had kings well before the Majapahit invasion (A. Hobart et al, 1996:24), and a putatively egalitarian view of pre-Majapahit Balinese society, with distinct but unranked title-groups, seems unlikely to me. More likely, I think, is the interpretation in which the *kasta* groups only added a more formalised and clearly Hinduised version of a pre-existing, looser social hierarchy - obviously, based on other than Indic/Hindu ideological criteria. Korn's material (1984:330-333) on social "classes" in the Bali Aga village of Tenganan is instructive. Korn found in that village a system of social stratification wherein a dualistic administrative structure (of paired "left" and "right"-side officials) was also divided into five ranked categories of officials. Korn does not state, but strongly implies, that at least some of these positions were hereditary. Interestingly, the two lowest-ranked paired positions in this scheme bore the titles *pande wesi* / *pande mas* and *pasek* / *bendesa*, all of which are today the names of Sudra title-group *soroh* clans.

In other words, some concept of social hierarchy has probably always existed in Bali in historical times. The *kasta* groups, since Majapahit, did not bring a totally new concept with them from Java; they merely imposed a refined version, which has prevailed until the present - much to the chagrin of the non-*kasta* groups, who found themselves lumped in with the general populace as "commoners" or Sudra.

Present-day Brahmana, and the higher Satria (closer relatives of the royal lines) in Bali, though not without their own non-conformists⁶, have in general no qualms about asserting their inherent social superiority. Such assertiveness is demonstrated in many ways, blatant and subtle, as I will demonstrate below. I would hasten to add, though, that the assertiveness of social superiority is, in my observation, much more a group issue than an individual preoccupation for particular members of these groups.

This requires clarification. Groups are, after all, comprised of individuals, and it may seem a pointless abstraction to focus on "group issues" (Barth, 1993:104). But the identity of many Balinese is genuinely and intimately tied up with group membership.

During fieldwork I met many individuals who were members of *kasta* status-groups (as indicated by their titles, which are always used), and some of them actually declared their lack of interest in the trappings of social distinction - such as being addressed in high language by social inferiors, deferential body language, and so on. Many of them espoused the "modern" view that such hereditary privilege was an outmoded concept, harking back to a feudal past, and unsuited to the need by a developing country to educate and advance talented citizens, regardless of their status as measured by such traditional social yardsticks.

These were the views of individuals, many of whom had completed high school education, worked in the modern business or government sectors, and in my sample were for the most part young adults. There is of course also the possibility that these informants were telling me what they thought I wanted to hear on this subject. Ethnic (Balinese) and national (Indonesian) pride often manifested itself, in my experience, as an unwillingness to be seen as "backward" in socio-cultural matters, compared with the Western societies (seen as having long abandoned feudal social relations) from which the majority of anthropologists still come. One of the advantages of relatively long-term, resident fieldwork is that the researcher (hopefully) blends into the background to some extent, and can observe how people's behaviour in practice accords with their stated views on particular issues.

On the issue of social status in S, and in the *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja specifically, the privately stated views of some "progressive" members of *kasta* status-groups were never put into practice, and in fact were quite comprehensively negated by group dynamics in the public sphere which were designed to reinforce the hierarchical *kasta* world view. Examples of this will be found in Chapters Five and Six.

I have already stressed the apparent importance of membership in the status-group, be it *kasta* or non-*kasta*, for the identity of many of my informants. I found in Bali a degree of group orientation far greater than anything I have experienced in Australia. In my own society, the usual group of reference for the individual is the nuclear family household, more or less weakly extended to other close blood relations, and a few friends. Particularly for Australians of my acquaintance from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, wider links between individuals, such as membership in church congregations, sporting bodies, social clubs and the like do not even approach the solidarity enjoyed by Balinese through membership in a whole range of associations. As we have seen, these include voluntary special-interest clubs (*seka* - as for gamelan, traditional dance, harvest labour, etc), the vitally important mandatory residence-based associations (as members of the ritual village, i.e. as *krama desa*, and of the neighbourhood community, the *banjar*), and also, if appropriate, the trans-village status-groups with which I am here concerned.

It can be readily appreciated that the simultaneous membership by adult individuals in most or all of these various groups tends to furnish Balinese with a rich and multi-faceted identity. Of course, the satisfaction derived from one's membership in the group is ultimately dependent upon upholding group norms; loyalty to the group and the protection of its "reputation" in the wider society is expected. In the case, say, of the local gamelan club, this is not a matter of great consequence (except where inter-village rivalry is involved, as in district competitions - but "the group" in these cases is then one's own village, and status and status-groups per se are no longer the issue).

In the case of the status-groups, which transcend local and regional boundaries, group prestige (and ultimately, survival of the group itself) depends on the continued belief by members in their own status. It also depends on their continued ability to elicit public acknowledgment of that status. On the more superficial level, this includes the maintenance of established conventions of speech register and other behaviour which mark relative status. At a deeper level, status-group survival requires continued acceptance by the general public of the claimed ideological basis for their status. This is particularly important for the higher *kasta* groups, the Brahmana and Satria, members of which tend to reinforce their "traditional" status particularly through ideologically-informed ritual practices in village life. Such practices, detailed for the fieldsite in following chapters, assert the ideologically superior position of these groups. And group members are subject to the ongoing expectation that they will play their part in these practices - group loyalty demands nothing less.

So it is that individual "progressive" members of status-groups find it difficult to avoid participation in the various activities, whether in the ritual or civic sphere, as members of their particular group - and not simply as members of the village, or the residential community *banjar*, per se. I met a few younger Balinese who attempted to divorce themselves from their *kasta* group membership, and participate in community life and ceremonial as "ordinary Hindu-Balinese" (they lived in Denpasar, not the village). However, pressure on such people from their close and wider families to conform to group norms could be enormous, and a source of great stress to these dissidents. A Satria friend of mine (title: Anak Agung) was in this category. He had not entirely foresworn his *kasta* title, but used a very informal variant of it (in effect a subtle parody), and deliberately participated in just those aspects of temple and other rituals that involved no discrimination between participants based on their group status. Not surprisingly, these ritual aspects tended to be of chthonian derivation; such ritual (as described in Chapter Five) has a status-effacing, egalitarian community focus.

This friend, however, was an exception to the rule of group solidarity - and he paid a real price for his unorthodox stand. Most of his relatives would not speak to him

(Balinese term for this: *puik*). Being thoroughly urbanised and city-based, and not a little cynical (as he freely admitted), he coped well enough with his family's disapproval, and in fact rarely saw them.

Had he stayed in the village, however, his stand would have been much harder to maintain. As a member of the proud *kasta* of the warrior-kings, the Satria, he would have been expected to conduct himself as befitted his high birth. He would have resided in a *jero*, the term for a local Satria residence. Even if he insisted on using a low-*kasta* term for his houseyard, it would almost certainly be referred to by villagers as a *jero*. He might try to change this habit of deference; but at least some of the Sudra villagers and probably all of his high-*kasta* neighbours would want him to let them call his place a *jero*, whether he liked it or not.

His fellow Satria would of course support this deference, in the interests of *kasta* status. Their insistence on the regular use of status-marking language registers is only the most obvious of the several ways that the superior status of the *kasta* groups is embedded in the daily social and ritual interactions of village life. Special names for their residences, deferential body language from non-elite villagers, pride of place and special prerogatives at many ritual activities, and relative wealth (in many cases), all contribute to the perpetuation of *kasta* status, the imposition of a hierarchy of social worthiness onto the ancient Balinese tendency to social group diversity.

The following sections briefly review the strategies employed by the two major *kasta* groups and by two Sudra/non-*kasta* groups resident in S to assert their distinctiveness in village society. The difference in approach between the *kasta* and non-*kasta* groups could be summarised as the difference between groups claiming only to be unique and special (the Sudra title-groups), on one hand, and those claiming to be unique, special, and inherently ideologically superior (the *kasta* groups), on the other.

Kasta Status-group Activism

Former lords and village politics

Before Indonesian independence earlier this century, Balinese of the Satria (sometimes spelled Ksatria) *kasta* status-group, and particularly of the Satria Dalem,

relatives of the most prestigious royal house of Klungkung, were the virtually unchallenged masters. The eight kingdoms (seven, after the fall of Mengwi in 1891) were ruled by hereditary *raja*, with kingdom sub-districts and villages under the control of the *rajas'* relatives - generally all Satria, of course - although favoured low-*kasta* retainers were sometimes given limited authority and titles, such as *mekel*, to match (see Boon 1977 *passim* on a commoner "dynasty" in Tabanan, with the *mekel* title). The only challenges to this political overlordship came from Satria of similar high rank in other kingdoms, seeking to expand their territory, influence and prestige. The common people of the villages were "owned" by their lords, who referred to them as *kawula* (something close to "serf"). During the Dutch colonial period, restricted in South Bali to the first half of this century, the Satria were for the most part left in charge - for colonial administrative convenience. Satria honour, resting as it did on the ideology of the hereditary *dharma* or sacred duty/privilege of the warrior-king, was doubtless dealt a blow by the Dutch conquest - but at least the Satria political structure was left in place, albeit then under ultimate Dutch control.

Since independence, hereditary rulers have in theory been replaced by government officials - appointed civil servants at the higher levels of the bureaucracy, but still elected (from among two or three government-approved local candidates) at village level. The situation in Bali is remarkable for the extent that members of the families of the former rulers, that is the Satria, have adapted to the new rules of the political game, by securing appointment or election, as appropriate, to leadership positions at various levels in the government administrative hierarchy. This was true for the district (or regency) (*kabupaten*) of Gianyar (in which S village was located) while I lived there - the district head (*bupati*) was a Satria (title: Cokorda) from the Ubud area. And at the local level, the village head, as I have mentioned earlier, was a young Satria (title: Anak Agung) from the local Satria residence known as Jero Gede.

On my first visit to this residence, which was only a short walk from our houseyard, I was impressed by the size of the complex, and the quiet self-assurance of the several adult family members that I met there. I was introduced by my wife, who of course knew them well, being a fellow high-*kasta* person with roots in the village, moreover one related cognatically to the Jero Gede family - Mediani's father's grandmother came from that *puri*. The self-assurance of the *puri* residents was a quality that I often found in high-*kasta* people, probably related to their upbringing as a "higher species of humanity", in the hierarchical social system. Among the *kasta* elite, I never encountered the apparently excruciating, tongue-tied embarrassment known in Balinese as *lek* (Mead and Bateson, 1942). I did observe apparent cases of *lek* when low-*kasta* people, particularly older villagers with little formal education, were spoken to by status superiors.

I had the impression that *lek* was not part of the emotional repertoire of the residents of Jero Gede, the Satria *puri* that we were visiting. The patriarch of the family, Gung Kak Raka, was very proud of his Satria heritage (as members of the Satria Dalem clan, and relatives of the Dewa Manggis line of Gianyar royalty). In effect, the clan's *dharma* as rulers had been carried on to the present day with the election in 1989 (described in the following Chapter) of his nephew Gung Ngurah to the important "modern sector" position of village head (*kepala desa*). The extended family filled the *puri*, which was divided into three separate but contiguous sections. Gung Kak Raka's immediate family had one section, his brother Gung Kak Rangki's family had another, and the third section housed Gung Ngurah, the village head (whose father, a third brother of the first two mentioned, had died) and his wife and two children. All three wives of these men were Anak Agung themselves, in line with the preferential endogamy norms of the *kasta* status groups.

The whole family seemed to be aware that they were part of something special; they knew their family background well, and they were obviously proud that they were the descendants of kings. But for the vagaries of history, they would have been rulers still - if not actual kings, then at least local princes, with the power of life and death over the common people. I did not detect resentment that this type of power had passed in Bali, just a hint of nostalgia from the older generation. Real power might have gone, but they still had prestige - a mixture of traditional, ideologically-based status, augmented as ever by relatively considerable wealth (a few rice fields to rent out - although not many nowadays - and a couple of new cars). And there was the additional prestige and access to the government power structure inherent in the post of village head, for the time being safely in the hands of a scion of the family.

The prestige, as opposed to the authority, of the post of village head however was not as great as the reader might assume. The post was very much a bureaucratic one; its occupant wore the same quasi-military uniform worn by civil servants all over Indonesia. Gung Ngurah worked in a rather impressive two-storey office and spent his day dealing with the many administrative matters which represented the impact of the government bureaucracy upon the Indonesian citizen at village level. As everywhere, most villagers regarded the occasional necessity to deal with the bureaucracy as a real nuisance. There was also a widespread feeling that "the government" represented some sort of ill-defined, external menace - the bringer of "progress", development funding, baby health clinics, etc, but also a corrupt, patriarchal power hierarchy.

This ambiguity meant that the village head, if I am not mistaken, was regarded as something of a necessary evil - not the man himself, but the office that he filled. Given that the wider Indonesian bureaucracy was obviously unavoidable, villagers felt that they

should have someone in the position whom they could rely upon to stand up for the interests of their village. In particular, this meant lobbying hard for a bigger slice of domestic development funds, as these trickled down from the central administration⁷. The village head should also take the lead in settling disputes over alienable (non-banjar) land, feuds and factional disputes, etc. Often, such disputes are referred to him through his deputies, the *klian dinas* or assistant village heads, located in each *banjar*.

All of these matters, however, are legalistic in essence, albeit sometimes handled with a degree of ex officio paternalism thrown in. Preferably, the occupant of the village head position should show *wibawa*, which is something like charisma. Unfortunately, the pleasant young Satria who was village head in S was rather lacking in this department, a factor upon which villagers frequently commented, sometimes quite disparagingly - never in his presence, of course.

Nevertheless, the fact remained that the post of village head was in the hands of the local Satria. Gung Ngurah had his whole extended family to rely upon for advice and guidance - in particular his uncle, Gung Kak Raka who had experienced first hand the political upheavals of the Sukarno and the Suharto eras, and even had memories of the Dutch colonial period. His family had always been local rulers, as a branch of the Gianyar royalty.

From the point of view of the central government, the Balinese *kasta* divisions of society represented an exotic and, in practical terms, irrelevant curiosity. If the Balinese felt happier if their local political leaders came from the same *kasta* group which had provided their traditional (pre-colonial) overlords, then the government had no objection (Ida Bagus Rata, pers. comm.). The Dutch colonial predecessors of the modern Indonesian state had taken exactly the same approach in Bali. The allegiance of present-day officials, whether they were from traditional, *kasta* status-groups or not, was of course absolutely to the government, through the centralised bureaucracy. At village level, however, the fact that a Satria occupied the leadership position that was important to the central government had an obvious symmetry with the more traditional, *kasta* world view - a world view in which the Satria are "natural" leaders.

The Satria in S, through their representative Gung Ngurah, the village head, were as much involved in this "modern sector" political leadership as they were in the more traditional praxis of the Satria lifestyle. There were echoes of the latter, based on the *dharma* ideology of the warrior-king and protector of the common folk who are his subjects. For example, the village tutelary deity, the *barong*, was usually kept at the large private shrine (*merajan agung*) which was part of Jero Gede. Villagers said that they felt that the *barong* was safer there than in its customary abode, the Death Temple (*pura*

dalem) of the village. At the time of our stay in S, there was considerable trouble with thieves from other islands, some of whom were reckless enough to enter village temples at night and break into sacred storage cupboards in search of gold ornaments. Sacrilegious defilement of the *barong* would invite disaster for the village; the spiritual potency of the Satria shrine, together with its relative inaccessibility, was considered to be so great that it made a safer "home" for the *barong* than its normal residence.

The involvement of the high Satria from Jero Gede in the day to day affairs of the village was about on a par with that of other community members. Gung Kak Raka always attended the monthly meetings of the *banjar*, and often contributed to its deliberations. He certainly did not assume any sort of dominant role in that self-consciously egalitarian context. On the contrary, he was softly-spoken and almost self-effacing - more like a rather modest committee member than a warrior-prince - but such polite (*alus*) deportment was in fact expected of all the *banjar* members when they addressed the meeting. It was a sign of respect and acknowledgment of the prestige of the *banjar* ideal.

The *banjar* meeting agendas often dealt with matters of the organisation of ritual events, or more domestic issues like disputes between neighbours, whether gambling should be allowed in the bale *banjar*, etc. Gung Kak Raka usually kept silent on such issues. But when matters of a more overtly "political" nature arose, he had a bigger input. Such occasions typically involved money in some way. Suspensions about the proper accounting of funds levied on villagers for ritual expenses was a recurring theme. This, however, was basically an "internal" matter for the *banjar*. On the other hand, the application of funding originating from outside the *banjar*, such as government development funding for village improvements, was often a source of acrimonious debate. These funds were handled by a village-level permanent committee (LKMD - see note 7) in which the village head played a leading role. As Gung Kak Raka was the village head's uncle, and obviously privy to the machinations of government at the local level, he was often involved in explaining various decisions of the village head and the LKMD committee, and attempting to pacify *banjar* members who felt aggrieved (for example, because some project - such as the paving of a stretch of dirt road - went to a neighbouring *banjar* of the village instead of Sepenan Kaja).

In this respect, Gung Kak acted to some extent as an informal conduit between the *dinas* village administration and the Sepenan Kaja *banjar* community. The LKMD/LMD committees had much the same function, but these committees were made up of *dinas* village officials (including the *klian dinas* of each *banjar*) and in practice were quite secretive in their deliberations - to the frequent annoyance of *banjar* members. The village head (Gung Kak's nephew), although also physically living at Jero Gede, had officially

joined the *banjar* of Sepenan Tengah⁸. I did not attend the *banjar* meetings there, but was told that Gung Ngurah usually had his hands full at *banjar* meetings, explaining the decisions of his office to the *banjar* assembly.

The attendance and informal "government liaison" role played by Gung Kak and Gung Ngurah at the monthly meetings of two of Sepenan's four *banjar* demonstrated both the domination of *dinas* village leadership by the local Satria and the salience of *dinas*/bureaucratic affairs for the *banjar* community. In fact, *banjar* members were as much interested in how the bureaucracy impinged on their lives as they were about the ritual life and good order of their *banjar* community. From this perspective, an informal update from the *dinas* authorities (or their uncles) was welcomed by *banjar* members. Also welcome was the monthly opportunity to have their say on *dinas* issues in a strictly egalitarian context that neutralised both the aura of authority of *dinas* officials and, in this case, the *kasta* status of Gung Kak (at *banjar* Sepenan Kaja meetings) and Gung Ngurah (at *banjar* S. Tengah meetings).

It is worth repeating that Satria dominance of the *dinas* arena did not extend to the *banjar* context. Wayan Sadra (a Sudra), as *klian adat*, chaired all *banjar* meetings. He was a respected coordinator, treasurer, record-keeper, and expert on *adat* customs and traditions. When chairing meetings, he kept order and ensured that people got the chance to speak. But he was not in charge of proceedings, and was open to challenge from the floor of the meeting at any time, should he be judged to be favouring any party, or deviating from the rules of meeting conduct. The *banjar* meeting epitomised the egalitarian ideal of the community - a value to the forefront in many community-oriented contexts, as described in the following Chapters.

Because of this egalitarian ethos, any *banjar* member could be elected *klian adat* - including members of high-*kasta* groups. Gung Kak could have been *klian adat*, as easily as anyone else. However, if he ever did find himself in that position, he would be there strictly as a community member who had the confidence of the *banjar* membership, and not because of his *kasta* status. The occupation of the village head position by his nephew, however, was quite a different matter. Gung Ngurah's election as *kepala desa* (described in the following Chapter) owed much to villager perceptions of status and the appropriateness of having one of the "traditional leaders" - that is, the Satria - as political leader and representative of the village in the modern state formation. The domination of the *dinas* arena by local Satria, through popular election rather than the force and coercion of feudal times, showed the continuing salience for many villagers of the ideology of *kasta* in the realm of community political leadership. The following section deals with the salience of *kasta* ideology in the case of the Brahmana, humanity's "purest" in the *kasta* hierarchy.

Solidarity amongst the priestly elite

The Brahmana of Sepenan Kaja

The Brahmana, it will be remembered, are the *kasta* group from which come the *pedanda* high priests of Bali-Hinduism. This *kasta* group is generally credited with - or at least, claims - ascribed expertise in the more esoteric religious practices, and is acknowledged by most Balinese as possessed of the highest level of hereditary purity⁹ allowed to humans. The language level used by commoners when speaking to, or about, Brahmana people is the highest level, with a subset of super-respectful terms used for *pedanda* priests, almost melodramatically theatrical in translation¹⁰. Not even the direct descendants of Satria kings merit this degree of respect.

I refer in the above title to the Brahmana as the "priestly elite"; it will be remembered though that only a small proportion of Brahmana men, and an even smaller number of Brahmana women, actually do become high priests. Nevertheless, the Brahmana as a group rely upon their exclusive prerogative as providers of *pedanda* as a basis for claims to the superior status they have long enjoyed in Balinese society (Sugriwa, 1993). During their daily devotions, when they make the holy water (*tirta*) used in many ritual events, the *pedanda* are possessed by the great god Siwa himself - by far the pinnacle of spiritual experience available to humans. The tinkling of a *pedanda*'s *bajra* bell, emanating from Gria Angkatan, next door to our *gria*, was a daily reminder to all within earshot that the *banjar* possessed a resident *pedanda* (Ratu Pedanda Istri Kania, matriarch of the family of Gus Oman, the *klian dinas*).

The Brahmana, through their *pedanda* priests, have maintained something of a monopoly over a body of arcane knowledge required to permit high priests to reach a level of personal purity such that they can withstand the dangerous spiritual impact of possession by Siwa (Rubinstein, 1991:44). At least, they have maintained the impression among the people that they have this expertise - and, from the pragmatic viewpoint of the perpetuation of Brahmana status and privilege in society, the maintenance of the group's reputed mastery of dangerous religious knowledge is sufficient. The exclusive nature of Brahmana claims to such mastery is of course not unchallenged; I have already mentioned the minority dissident Pasek and Pande clans who reject the near-universal use of

pedanda at major ritual, employing instead their own high priests (*empu*), and even allowing these priests to make their own holy water - the quintessential high priestly duty.

Nevertheless, when I lived in the village, this dissidence was definitely a minority view, although situated within a somewhat wider discussion about the appropriateness of the whole *kasta* system of social division itself. This discussion I encountered outside the village, in the more urban and urbane centres, where modernism generally, and tourism in particular, were having an impact on world views. In Sepenan, I heard no direct criticism of the *kasta* system. This is not to say that there was no such dissident feeling, simply that nobody expressed such criticism to me. Given my close association with a Brahmana household, which in effect I had "married into", this was not surprising.

The village of Sepenan, and particularly the *banjar* of S. Kaja, where I lived, had an unusually high representation of Brahmana households. Although they varied greatly in household wealth, and hence in the relative grandeur of their dwellings, shrines, gardens, and so on, these Brahmana extended families conducted themselves in a manner appropriate to their status, at the peak of the *kasta* hierarchy. Raucous speech and behaviour was shunned, and almost exaggerated politeness was employed to other members of the status-group, especially when lower-status people might be listening.

For their part, members of the Sudra majority always used appropriate language levels in conversation with Brahmana people. Rich or poor (only Gus Agung, the *sekwilda*, and Gus Aji Karangasem, the doctor, could be described as rich), every married Brahmana man with children was accorded the honorific "Gus Aji" before his name or familiar nickname; every married Brahmana woman with children was "Dayu Biang" so-and-so. The appropriate *alus* (refined) language was used, whatever the occasion (dressed up for a big ceremony, or stripped down for work in the fields), although this was sometimes relaxed between social equals (i.e. between members of the same *kasta*), when there were no Sudra around to hear.

By virtue of their numbers (40 family heads out of 171 for the whole *banjar*), as well as their high *kasta* status, the Brahmana of Sepenan Kaja comprised a prominent subset of the *banjar* community. The role of the *pedanda istri* in officiating at public temple ritual strongly reinforced local Brahmana status by validating in practice the ideological claims of that status-group as the Veda-decreed "conductors of the ritual". Also, the high priest's son, Gus Oman, took a leading role in life cycle ritual, including that which required full *banjar* participation (basically, funerals). Gus Oman was at that time (1993-94) the *klian dinas* for Sepenan Kaja, but had previously been a *klian adat*, and prided himself on his knowledge of *adat* custom. He played a leading role, for instance, in the various rites employed during the funeral of my wife's uncle (Chapter

Six). In fact, his role on that occasion seemed to me to be greater than that of the *banjar*'s actual *klian adat*, Sadra. The deceased was of course a fellow Brahmana, which was certainly a factor in Gus Oman's close involvement.

A significant development in the *adat* arena was the move by Gus Oman and his *gria* to handle the preparation of the required offerings for funerals, and sell these to the families involved. The rationale for this was the belief that Brahmana *gria*, especially *gria* housing a *pedanda* high priest, knew best what offerings were appropriate for such occasions. Offerings prepared by Brahmana were also thought to be most efficacious, having been prepared by the ritually purest of the *kasta* hierarchy. However, my suggestion that this could represent a first step on the road to a complete takeover of the *banjar adat*'s ritual functions by the Brahmana *kasta* elite was strongly denied by Gus Oman. He pointed out that it was simply more practical for many families to have all their offerings prepared as a job lot; the many other aspects of such ritual would always be handled by the family and the *banjar*. Other informants agreed with this. Time would tell whether the increasing claims on the time and energy of villagers engaged in earning a living in the modern era in fact lead to increasing specialisation by Brahmana households in a more comprehensive handling of life cycle ritual currently undertaken by the *banjar*.

Brahmana Kemenuh clan (soroh) solidarity

The Brahmana recognise an internal hierarchy of status, as well as claiming pre-eminent status as a group (*kasta*) vis-à-vis all other Balinese. Within the Brahmana, the Kemenuh clan (*soroh*) is generally acknowledged to be of highest status (Rubinstein, 1991:59). My wife's family is Kemenuh. While we were in the village, her younger sister effected what was to traditionalists (such as her mother) a fairytale marriage alliance, when she married a young Kemenuh Brahmana man from a prestigious *gria* (boasting a married couple who were both *pedanda*, his uncle and aunt), and moreover located in the village of Kemenuh (also in Gianyar) itself.

This wedding was celebrated with maximum pomp and ceremonial, as described in Chapter Six, in marked contrast to the very modest ritual by which my wife and I were married¹¹. The lack of ceremony in our own case no doubt reflected the fact that marriage to foreigners was sufficiently beyond the pale as to warrant playing down the whole idea, while still performing the minimum rites (basically purificatory) required by *adat* customary law. But my main point here is to indicate that there was an element of status-linked group solidarity operating within as well as between the *kasta* status-groups (Brahmana, Satria, Wesia) themselves. This was well established for the Satria and Wesia, where the several named clans (Anak Agung, Cokorda, Dewa, Gusti, Gusti Ngurah, etc)

could be ranked, not without disputes and regional variation (Boon, 1977:166; Howe, 1995), in relation to the proximity of those groups to the thrones of the pre-Independence royalty, in particular to the pre-eminent Klungkung dynasty (Wiener, 1995:97ff; Geertz, 1980:16-17)).

Soroh clan pride was much less obvious in the case of the Brahmana, where any of the Brahmana clans¹² could provide *pedanda* high priests. There was a definite tendency amongst my wife's family to foster solidarity with other Brahmana of the same "kind", namely the Kemenuh. This was effected, while I was in the village, by the continued use of the (related) Kemenuh clan *pedanda istri* (despite the distance involved), and the marriage of my sister-in-law to a Kemenuh man. After that marriage, the two families formally agreed to *saling sembah*, meaning that members of the two families linked by that marriage would from then on attend each other's major rituals (Boon, 1990:120) and pray together in each other's family shrines (*merajan*). This practice was a public acknowledgment of an intimate equality between the two families - ultimately founded, of course, on having the shared ancestors of the Kemenuh clan. The relationship was reinforced in day-to-day life by co-operation in such prosaic ways as providing employment for members of one family in the business enterprises of members of the other family. As well, my wife's family began to use the services of the *pedanda* at Gria Gde Kemenuh at times when it was less convenient for the *pedanda istri* at Peringalot to oblige.

Apart from Gria Suci, there was only one other Kemenuh clan *gria* in the *banjar* - that of the family of Gus Tu Arnawa (Gus Tu "Telkom"). There was a similar degree of solidarity between the families of the nine Brahmana *gria* in Sepenan Kaja who were of the Manuaba clan. The family at Gria Angkatan, which included Gus Oman and the *pedanda istri*, were Keniten Brahmana, along with one other *gria*.

The patus Brahmana meeting

After living at Gria Suci for some months, I was surprised when I first noticed my brother-in-law, sporadically resident at our houseyard, wearing a black T-shirt with a rather grandiose screen-printed logo on the back, declaring the wearer to be a member of a group called Semeton Brahmana Sepenan (the Brahmana Family - in the wider sense - of Sepenan). He explained to me that the local Brahmana had indeed formed a mutual-aid or solidarity group, referred to informally as the *patus* Brahmana (*patus* usually refers to a mandatory contribution in kind to the material requisites of certain *banjar* ceremonies, but

in Sepenan also referred to these *kasta*-based associations). I was assured that there were other *patus* associations - one for the Satria, and even one for the Sudra/commoner majority (Chapter Five).

I wondered why the Brahmana of Sepenan felt the need to band together in such an organised way, when they already had the strong ties of *kasta* status-group solidarity, not to mention the more intimate bonds of clan solidarity just referred to. Shortly after learning of the existence of the *patus* Brahmana, therefore, I took the opportunity to attend a *patus* meeting, to attempt to get some idea of the rationale for the association.

The meeting was held at the residence of Gus Aji "Dokter", by local standards a luxurious *gria*, with a large open verandah suitable for such occasions. The doctor was present, having made the long trip by car from his then home and medical practice in Singaraja on the north coast. Despite his profession, he smoked incessantly, as did most of the twenty or so other Brahmana men from the area who attended. As befitted the solemn and vaguely religious nature of the occasion, all wore *adat* traditional dress (for men, a sarong and shirt, with a colourful *selendang*, like a scarf, tied around the waist; for women, a *kebaya* blouse replaced the less ornate shirts of the men). Few women were present: my wife (basically to ease the incongruousness of my presence), the doctor's wife (it was her house, after all, and she was host for the meeting), and Jero Rasman, from our houseyard - she busied herself in serving coffee, cake and cigarettes.

One woman was there in her own right, as a local Brahmana entitled to *patus* membership - that was Dayu Tu Suwati, probably my best informant (apart from my wife), whose background I described in the previous Chapter. Dayu Tu was interested in the *patus* Brahmana concept, but also sceptical about its value and its potentially divisive effect in the *banjar* community. She said that she was attending the meeting to see what was motivating the more committed members of the group.

After some preliminary chat, the meeting of Semeton Brahmana Sepenan was called to order, with proceedings chaired by Gus Aji Anom, a senior member who in fact then lived in the nearby regional centre of Gianyar; he was a retired policeman. He evidently had a penchant for elaborate language, opening the meeting with a short communal prayer and a long speech on the privileges and obligations of the Brahmana. His speech was replete with cosmological references, which seemed to be intended to reinforce, by association with the divine, the ideological basis of Brahmana status. As the entire proceedings were in high Balinese, I could only catch the general tone, but I recorded the meeting on videotape and later went over it with my wife, to ascertain what was discussed after the opening formalities.

The body of the meeting consisted of just four speakers, who took turns at delivering sometimes quite long monologues, answering points raised by other speakers in the process. A major topic and source of some heated oratory was the matter of the non-attendance of some local Brahmana who were deemed to be *patus* members (all local Brahmana were) but never turned up to *patus* meetings. Some of these men, senior Brahmana who were expected to attend and show group solidarity, sent their sons to represent them - but these junior members apparently did not participate in discussions, and could not really represent their fathers' opinions on matters. The matter of unpaid *patus* levies was also discussed. The voluntary nature of *patus* membership made it difficult to insist on attendance by qualified (Brahmana) members - one was born a Brahmana, but not a *patus* member.

Excuses were made for the non-attendance of certain members, generally friends and relatives of the speaker - especially those in faraway Denpasar, including my father-in-law. Some accepted that distance should excuse these members, but others felt that they should make the effort, for the sake of Brahmana solidarity. Gus Aji Agung, the high-ranking civil servant and former *balian* (spirit medium), spoke in conciliatory tones about the need for locally-resident Brahmana to be the "backbone" of the association, and to gently coax recalcitrant members into attending meetings. He did, however, manage to name two prominent local Brahmana who did not attend - a significant act, as the names of those being obliquely criticised were not otherwise specifically mentioned by speakers. I surmised (and this was later confirmed) that the two mentioned were not on good terms with Gus Agung, despite his rhetoric about Brahmana solidarity.

Gus Anom, who opened the meeting so solemnly, contributed a note of near farce when he claimed that it would be all right if he was sometimes represented by his son at *patus* meetings, as he (the father) was often preoccupied with his hobby of playing the gambling card game *ceki*. The utter incongruity of this remark in that sombre setting drew howls of laughter and considerably lightened the tone of the hitherto earnest discussion on the apparently serious issue of keeping up attendances at *patus* meetings - Gus Anom was only joking, and, as chairman of the *patus* Brahmana, would be the last one to fail to attend its meetings.

Most of the meeting was taken up with the pragmatic issues of meeting attendance and financial contributions to *patus* coffers. This treasury was intended as a sort of insurance fund, to assist *patus* members in need from time to time. There was some talk of the possibility of organising a study group for *patus* members, to improve their knowledge of *adat* (customary law) and religious matters. This was the kind of thing that I was expecting to find as the primary focus of the *patus* - a reinforcement of the "comparative advantage" in matters cosmological claimed by the Brahmana. However,

there was not much interest in this aspect. The main concern seemed to be with the survival of the *patus* itself, obviously seen to be threatened by dwindling attendances at its meetings.

The meeting concluded with a meal, followed by an informal chat on the manicured lawns of our host's *gria*. I was playfully addressed as "Gus Aji", making me an honorary Brahmana for the day, which as usual I took with a grain of salt - despite Gus Anom's feigned sincerity. I sought the reaction of a couple of *patus* members, especially Gus Anom, the chairman, to a concern of mine. Given that the *patus* association was formed to promote the mutual welfare of its members (as apparently it was), was it not in effect a rival body to the *banjar* community association itself, to which *patus* members also belonged? And, since *patus* membership was based on *kasta* affiliation, could not the existence of the *patus* be seen by other villagers as an attempt to supplant or usurp the functions of the egalitarian *banjar*, dividing the community (if taken to the ultimate conclusion) completely along *kasta* lines?

Gus Anom was adamant that this perception was not shared by villagers. He explained that everyone accepted the existence of the *Patus Brahmana* as a harmless, even beneficial voluntary association, no different in principle from other such local associations, such as the gamelan group or the *pesantian* group whose members studied the sacred texts sung (*mekidung*) on ritual occasions. Referring to the traditional role of his *kasta* as guardians, if not disseminators, of sacred religious knowledge, he claimed that a major justification for the formation of the *patus Brahmana* was its activities aimed at fostering a love of sacred texts, ritual chants, and the wide range of ceremonial practice and its underlying Hindu-Bali cosmology.

Such activities, he explained, lifted the overall "spiritual tone" of the village, and were therefore beneficial to everybody. Aside from those lofty ideals, the *patus* was simply an association of "similar" people who had decided to band together for mutual support in time of need, showing the allegedly universal Indonesian spirit of *gotong-royong*, which he invoked freely as a major *raison d'être* for the existence of the *patus Brahmana*. He seemed slightly uncomfortable when I suggested that the same principle of mutual aid was the basis of the *banjar* itself - the corporate and ritual community to which all local residents (including absentee members with ties to local land) belonged. Yes, he agreed, that was true; but the *patus* was merely a subsidiary of that overall community - a sort of special interest group, its members in no way seeking to divorce themselves from wholehearted membership in the *banjar* community.

When Gus Anom referred to *patus* members as being "similar", he was of course alluding to their common membership in the Bali-wide Brahmana status-group. What he

did not allude to was the very special position of this particular status-group in the hierarchical *kasta* system of social ranking. But he, and I, knew very well that the Brahmana stood at the very apex of *kasta* social supremacy. He and I also both knew that acceptance of this traditional social supremacy was far from universal in Bali, although we did not broach that thorny topic at the *patus* meeting. I wondered if the *patus* Brahmana was not really an attempt to reassert the pre-eminence of that *kasta*, at the local level, in a more "modern" format - as a sort of exclusive club or association, reinforcing the general, loose solidarity of the status-group in the local, *banjar* community context. The role of the *patus* Brahmana at the funeral of my wife's uncle, described in Chapter Six, convinced me of this.

My father-in-law, Prof. Dr. Ida Bagus Rata, was a prominent Brahmana who grew up in Sepenan Kaja but had long lived in the capital, Denpasar. The thirty kilometre trip to the village had been his excuse for non-attendance at *patus* Brahmana meetings (although he and his family made regular trips "home" to the village for various ritual obligations). In a sense it was fortunate that he had this excuse, because he was worried by the *kasta*-specific exclusivity of the *patus* association, and its potential for social divisiveness. The excuse of distant residence allowed him to avoid the daily possibility of having to debate the matter with those local Brahmana who support the *patus*. Aji (as I called him) firmly believed that the tendency to form *patus* associations based on *kasta* (including non-*kasta* or Sudra) affiliation was a threat to *banjar* solidarity. The *banjar*, as the overall mutual aid association covering all residents within its boundaries, of course embraced members of all *kasta* status. The *banjar* existed to ensure the proper conduct of all necessary life cycle ritual for members, especially relating to deaths. There were some (status-marking) differences of detail in the ritual for the higher *kasta* members, but nothing that precluded full participation of *banjar* members. In other words, as Aji put it, "The *banjar* is the best organisation for local affairs".

Aji still had considerable local "clout" despite living away from the *banjar*. He was of the Kemenuh *soroh* of the Brahmana, mentioned above. When he was wealthy and owned two "art shops" a decade previously, at Mas, he was the major benefactor in a costly refurbishment of the *banjar* meeting hall. He assiduously attended all the important cyclic rituals, and the life-cycle rites for the more notable local families¹³. The rather loose working conditions at his university allowed him to escape to the village more or less whenever he needed to. So it seemed to me that Aji's refusal to join the *patus* Brahmana would have been a serious blow to the association's prestige, and even its legitimacy as an organisation representing all local Brahmana.

Aji was circumspect in discussing what was evidently a sensitive issue, but he did provide me with some insight into the mindset of the active *patus* members, when he

spoke of the circumstances which led to the founding of the association, only a few years previously. It was apparently triggered by an incident which occurred when our back neighbour Wayan Sadra, the *klian adat*, was holding, as the Balinese say, a *karya* (a "work", in the sense of a significant ritual). In the midst of the frantic activity which marked those occasions, someone asked a guest to help out in the kitchen - feeding masses of guests was a major task for the houseyard holding the wedding, funeral, tooth filing, or whatever the *karya* happened to be.

The problem was that the guest who was asked to carry some pots was Sadra's close neighbour Ida Bagus Indra, a Brahmana whom I have mentioned previously, and whose complete lack of affectation and self-importance made such an impression on me when I got to know him. Gus Indra was reportedly happy to carry the pots - his community spirit and willingness to "get his hands dirty" was well known in the *banjar*. However, certain other Brahmana (I could not get any names) took exception to the fact that a low-*kasta* person working in the kitchen had "ordered" a status superior to do something. Private meetings were subsequently held, and the *patus* Brahmana was formed shortly after.

I found it incredible that this single incident, evidently quite trivial, could lead to the radical step which, given the traditional monopoly over community organisation enjoyed by the *banjar*, the *patus* formation represented. Subsequent enquiries with Aji and, separately, with Dayu Tu Suwati, who was quite prepared to criticise her own status-group, revealed that indeed there had been a degree of separatist sentiment among local Brahmana for many years.

She told me that, some twenty years previously, local Brahmana had wanted to build their own death temple or *pura dalem*, following some dispute (the details of which she did not recall), but this idea was rejected by the village as a whole. Building such a temple would also be a very radical separatist step, because by definition the *pura dalem* is one of the three *kahyangan tiga*, the fundamental set of three village temples supposedly possessed by every customary village or *desa adat* in Bali. On failing to obtain village agreement for this highly separatist proposal, Brahmana activists then agreed to worship at the village's combined *pura puseh/pura desa* temple complex, provided that they could erect their own *padmasana*. This is a stylised stone pillar in the shape of a god-seat atop a lotus flower, and is an object of devotion special to the high-*kasta* groups, especially the Brahmana. The *padmasana* represents Siwa in his guise as Surya, the sun god - or, alternatively, the supreme God Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (Swellengrebel, 1984:56). This suggestion was also rejected by the village, and in the end no new structures were built.

Since then, the Brahmana had maintained a certain degree of separatism in their village-level ritual devotions. I stayed a full calendar year at the fieldsite, covering approximately one and a half Balinese ritual (210-day) years. During that time I attended every ritual event in which my houseyard members participated (and several others which they did not attend). Of those ritual events which by nature embraced and involved the spiritual welfare of the whole village (such as the anniversary or *odalan* of each of the three *kahyangan tiga* village temples), as far as I could tell, the Brahmana of Sepenan Kaja (which has nearly all the Brahmana residents in the village of Sepenan) attended only the rites held at the *pura dalem*. This temple did indeed possess a *padmasana*, and it was inevitably before this shrine that I sat cross-legged with my Brahmana in-laws on many occasions, hands clasped together just above the head, a frangipani flower between the fingertips, baking in the tropical sun on a concrete floor but enjoying the cooling sprinkle of *tirta* holy water liberally dispensed by the (non-*kasta*) temple priest or *mangku*.

On these occasions there was much socialising between the Brahmana families, but not so much between them and other villagers, although it would be wrong to say that the Brahmana kept to themselves, either on those ritual occasions or in daily life in the village. The feeling of community interdependence in the face of possible personal or wider-scale disaster was still strong, as the more ethnographic material in the following two Chapters illustrate. But the exclusive attendance by Brahmana at village-level ritual held in the death temple - the only "public" site possessing a *padmasana* - was clearly an expression of a Brahmana assertion of ideological superiority.

The nub of the issue, which I had some trouble getting to with informants, was again status. By worshipping before the various shrines standing within the walls of the combined foundation/village temple, or the other shrines at the death temple (apart from the *padmasana*), Brahmana villagers would in effect be humbling themselves before the ancestors of people of lower *kasta* - and, for most of the local Brahmana, that was simply untenable. The only "safe" option, from this viewpoint, was to confine their devotions to the *padmasana*. In this way, everybody understood that the Brahmana were praying to the supreme Godhead, Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, and not to anyone's ancestors in particular.

The formation of the *patus* Brahmana seemed to me to be a more tangible expression of the separatist and exclusivist tendency of which the ritual aloofness just mentioned was an illustration. On the other hand, the refusal of some leading Brahmana to join the *patus* reflected the willingness of some of this elite status-group to put *banjar*/community solidarity ahead of the apparent politics of divisiveness enthusiastically pursued by certain other Brahmana. In any case, open friction was carefully avoided, both between Brahmana of differing opinions and between Brahmana and the rest of the community.

As far as I could determine, there were no Brahmana who actually advocated a complete split from the rest of the *banjar*. Dayu Tu Suwati maintained that the precondition for a successful family *karya* (lifecycle or other household ritual), namely that the villagers of the *banjar* turn up in numbers, was as important for the more separatist Brahmana as it was for the other villagers. If only *patus* members were to attend a local Brahmana's *karya*, the shame would be difficult to bear. Hence, the *patus* Brahmana remained a low-key element in Sepenan Kaja daily life, holding monthly meetings at a private *gria* (certainly not a public venue such as the *banjar* meeting hall). The rare, but significant, public activities of the *patus* were confined to participation at events such as the funeral of members - for example, that of my wife's uncle, described in Chapter Six.

"Commoner" Title-group Solidarity

Pasek *dadia* corporate descent groups

The Pasek resident in S were found primarily in our own *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja. In this *banjar* lived fifteen families¹⁴ of the Pasek Kayu Selem (Blackwood) clan, with one *dadia* shrine (*sanggah gede*) at the residence of the senior member. There were six families of the Pasek Pulosari clan, highly corporate in orientation, with a large and well-kept *dadia* shrine. There were also two Pasek Gelgel families, and five Pasek Segening families.

On several occasions during my fieldwork, the Pasek Pulosari *dadia* in Sepenan Kaja held ceremonies for their own group, such as the *odalan* anniversary of their shrine, which were notable for their ostentation. This group had set up a formidably efficient loudspeaker in their *dadia* shrine, and used it to good effect on these occasions to broadcast pious chants (*mekidung*) for days (and nights) at a time, at high volume. (I was reminded of the pre-dawn wake-up calls for the Islamic *subuh* prayer, also broadcast by loudspeaker, in many other parts of Indonesia). With a large identifying sign facing the main road in their well-maintained shrine, itself the site of regular, unstintingly-funded group ceremonial, these Pasek were clearly asserting their presence as a discrete group of substance within the local community of Sepenan Kaja.

This is not to say that this group of Pasek, nor indeed the other Pasek of the *banjar*, were in any way aloof from the rest of the community. Members of these *dadia* were as active as anyone in the daily affairs of the *banjar*, participating fully in its monthly

meetings, Sunday morning working bees (*kerja bakti*), ad hoc projects like the reflooring of the banjar meeting hall, road surfacing, and so on. As far as I could determine, no local Pasek were active in the Bali-wide Warga Pasek movement that I referred to earlier - although such activism was in a category of information that people might have preferred to keep from outsiders, particularly in a *banjar* with a relatively high proportion of high-*kasta* residents, who could be expected to look askance at the implied challenge to the *kasta* hierarchical model. In any case, a number of informants said that there was little interest by local Pasek in what could be termed the "Pasek consciousness" movement.

Certainly, there were no Pasek in Sepenan who refused the use of *tirta* holy water prepared by Brahmana high priests. The two Pasek clans in Sepenan Kaja who maintained a high degree of corporate identity (the Pulosari and Kayu Selem clans) were at the same time good communal citizens of the *banjar* as well. They were clearly at pains to balance their specific group identity as members of a particular clan with their community identity as *banjar* members. Family ritual of *dadia* members, and particularly *odalan* anniversaries of the *dadia* shrines of these clans, was celebrated in grand style. But clan members were always on hand when *banjar* and village ritual was held (as described in the following Chapters). The precedence of the *banjar* community over *dadia* (in this case, clan-based *dadia*) solidarity was expressed by Geertz and Geertz (1975:114) as follows:

For all the internal solidarity a kingroup may achieve, it can never, at least in theory, gain precedence over the hamlet [*banjar*] of which it is but a part.

The Pasek Kayu Selem clan *dadia* was also highly corporate, with several cases of endogamous marriages reinforcing the local clan. Both this clan and the Pasek Pulosari, however, adhered to the principle of *banjar* precedence proposed by Geertz and Geertz.

The Pande (metalsmith) clan

The Pande title-group was also represented in Sepenan Kaja by a small group of five houseyards. These families were of the Pande Besi *soroh* (*besi*: iron); a larger group of their relatives resided in Sepenan Kelod. These Pande were mentioned in Guernonprez's study of the major Pande groups in Bali (1987:57 *passim*). As mentioned previously, some Pande asserted ritual autonomy (and thereby their ideological separateness, if not equality or even superiority) by refusing to use *tirta* holy water consecrated by Brahmana *pedanda* priests. The Pande in Sepenan Kaja had until recently been accustomed to obtaining *tirta* from the above-mentioned *pedanda istri* resident at our neighbour's *gria*. They had, by all accounts, found it more conducive to communal harmony to forgo the refusal of Brahmana *tirta*. Nevertheless, shortly before I arrived in

the village, the Pande families in Sepenan Kaja had begun to use *tirta* consecrated by one of the handful of Pande priests (*empu*) in Bali, who lived relatively far away in Denpasar. The head of the local Pande clan, I Nyoman Pande, had decided to align himself with the more militant elements of the wider Pande clan, for whom the refusal of Brahmana *tirta* was mandatory.

Indicative of the low-key nature of this embryonic dissent in the Sepenan area, nobody seemed to be particularly concerned by Nyoman Pande's decision. Certainly our local *pedanda*, and her son, Gus Oman, thought it was "up to them" if they wanted to obtain *tirta* from their own (non-Brahmana) source. If the *pedanda istri* believed that such *tirta* was inferior to that prepared by Brahmana high priests like herself (who become, according to Bali-Hindu doctrine, the very embodiment of the great god Siwa himself during the preparation of holy water), she did not make an issue of it.

As with the Pasek, the Pande of Sepenan Kaja were good *banjar* citizens; their special clan identity was an attribute additional to their membership in the *banjar* community. The muted militancy (against the ideological supremacy of the Brahmana high priests, and by extension the whole *kasta* hierarchy) implied by Nyoman Pande's stand on the holy water issue seemed to be cheerfully tolerated - indeed, basically ignored - by the *banjar* in general, including the resident Brahmana and Satria "heavyweights".

The Bendesa Manik Mas group

This was a relatively large group of some 40 KK (family units), living in *banjar* Sepenan Kelod. The group also had its own *dadia* shrine, and celebrated its *odalan* anniversary with gusto - in the process, asserting their group uniqueness. Members traced their ancestry to a Bendesa Manik forebear in the village of Mas, and, more tentatively, ultimately to prehistoric Brahmana sources (Made Regeg, pers. comm.). (This was yet another case of a Sudra title-group relying, for at least a part of their group prestige, on descent from the *kasta* elite - thereby validating the claims to ideological supremacy of the present-day *kasta* status-groups). Bendesa, like Pasek, is a title associated with indigenous Balinese village chiefs (Goris, 1984b:92). The Manikan (as members of this group called themselves) claimed a more recent prestigious ancestor who, despite his Sudra status, had been appointed *punggawa* or local overlord of the region southwest of Sepenan during the reign of the former rulers, the Satria Kepandaian, in that area.

Pak Made Regeg, a prominent member of this group, was mentioned in the previous Chapter as a frequent visitor to our houseyard and expert reciter of sacred texts on

ceremonial occasions. He had named his first-born daughter Putu Manik (the word means "jewel") as a reference to the clan (cf Nyoman Pande, above). As well as the local *dadia* shrine, Pak De and other clan members attended the *odalan* celebrations of the clan temple at Mas. Like other Sudra title-groups, this Manikan group had ritual and family ties that transcended the village context - no less so than the *kasta* status-groups. This calls into question the assertion by Geertz and Geertz (1975:7) that the *kasta* "gentry" related primarily to other "gentry", throughout the island, whereas "[t]he world of the commoners is that of the village or hamlet".

"Demoted Satria" clans

Some of the village population claimed membership in several other named low-*kasta* clans, principally located in the adjoining *banjars* of Sepenan Tengah and S. Kelod. In Chapter One I mentioned the "demoted Satria" Ngakan clan, represented by fifteen family units, mainly living in S Tengah. Another clan called Pering was represented by ten families; they also claimed to have been of Satria status in the distant past, but to have lost their *kasta* status through repeated marriage (through the generations) of their ancestors with low-*kasta* women.

Only the Ngakan families from Sepenan Tengah represented a "reduced Satria" title-group with any real degree of group solidarity in the village. As mentioned in Chapter One, members of this group were attempting to raise their status by calling themselves "Dewa" ("Desak" for women) - exactly as other Ngakan were doing in "Corong", another Gianyar village, as reported by Howe (1995:10-17). Howe noted this "status drive" among Ngakan in a number of villages in Gianyar. As in the village studied by Howe, the efforts of the Sepenan Ngakan to have themselves addressed by the Satria titles was causing considerable friction, with no real resolution in sight. This status rivalry however had not affected the participation of members of this group in village and *banjar* activities. Indeed, they had no wish to separate from the wider community - merely to gain an increased status within the community.

Untitled Commoner Ritual

For the sake of completeness I will also mention here some examples of important ritual that I attended held by families not claiming affiliation to any named clan group at all. This category of the population was the majority in Sepenan Kaja (some 91 families out of a total of 171 families officially recorded) and, I believe, across Bali generally.

It should be noted that I found no specific category of "commoner ritual" as distinct from "Triwangsa ritual". Rather, status was proclaimed at ritual that happened to be held by high-*kasta* groups through a variety of details readily appreciated by the culturally attuned - that is, fellow Balinese - but in most cases likely to be missed by outside observers. Examples of such detail include special headdress worn by the bride and groom at a high-*kasta* wedding (see Chapter Six for this and other examples in the case of the wedding of my sister-in-law Dewi). The high status of the deceased at funerals staged by royalty is often marked by lavish expenditure on the funerary paraphernalia and specifically in details such as the number of small *tumpang* "roofs" stacked one upon another over the bier. In these exceptional cases, even the tourists now routinely bussed to watch such funerals can perhaps sense the status (as distinct from the wealth) of the Balinese involved.

However, the basic components of such ritual seem to be similar for all Balinese, with some allowance for local variations. And wealthy commoner families can certainly afford to put on equally lavish ceremonies for their own weddings, funerals, new house purifications and the like. This capability on the part of Sudra people is of course a relatively new phenomenon, wealth in the past being concentrated in the hands of the traditional elite, principally the Satria kings and their relatives. The changes wrought by modernisation and democratisation of the economy have enabled some low-*kasta* people to attain wealth rivalling or surpassing that of some high-*kasta* Balinese. This in itself constitutes a real challenge to one of the pillars of elite status: the wealthy "lifestyle" attribute whose importance for the maintenance of group status was stressed by Weber. It could be expected that the elite would renew their emphasis on the specific status-connoting aspects of public ritual, in reaction to the challenge posed by commoner wealth in these contexts. This is certainly a topic for further investigation.

For present purposes, I can report that I participated in several major ceremonies staged by commoner families that claimed no particular named hereditary group affiliation. My mother-in-law's family was a case in point. During my main fieldwork stay in Bali, I attended a purification ceremony (*melaspas*) of Ibu's natal houseyard at Pemogan, quite close to the tourist mecca of Kuta in South Bali.

This houseyard was relatively large - certainly considerably grander than Gria Suci, in Sepenan, where we were living. The purification ceremony was required for additions to the buildings in the complex and the family's shrine, which was also bigger than our own shrine at the *gria*. Proceedings occupied a full day, and perhaps three hundred people - family, *banjar* neighbours and friends - attended. No expense was spared to feed and entertain the guests. The specific religious rites required did not take much time; in fact, a form of *wayang kulit* shadow play that does not utilise a screen (as it is performed for the gods, not the guests in attendance) was conducted with the *dalang* puppeteer apparently oblivious to the crowd of guests eating and chatting all around the impromptu stage set up for the purpose. This kind of *wayang* performance was not mandatory for such ceremonies, but was considered a pious extra touch. It was expensive to stage - a fact not lost on guests and the local community.

My mother-in-law was one of the dancers engaged to perform several entertainment pieces for guests. She danced a *topeng tua* piece and got a rousing reception. I videotaped the performance and later played it back for her - the first time she had "seen herself dance". Her verdict was that she was "very good". An *arja* melodrama was also performed, with a renowned professional player involved - again, an extra expense for the benefit of guests to the family's ritual. There was also a cockfight in a yard behind the compound proper, well supported by the male guests, who as usual on such occasions took the opportunity for a little gambling in the guise of a religious devotion (*mecaru*, shedding the cocks' blood to appease the *buta* and *kala* spirits).

The food supplied to guests was of a high standard, and the general impression of this commoner family's ceremony that I gained was that this was a family of substance, able to stage family ritual on a scale of both piety and opulence not surpassed by many of the high-status families on the island.

I attended several funerals (*ngaben*) of Sudra/commoner people during my fieldwork stay and during subsequent visits to Bali. These included the funerals of two of my mother-in-law's older siblings. One was that of Ibu's sister, known to us as Wa Mangku, a lovely lady with a chronic chest and other medical conditions, who spent her last months staying with Ibu at Kesiman. Wa ("older aunt") had once been a temple priest (see p.23), hence the title "Mangku". The other funeral to be held at the same houseyard and graveyard, in the Titih area of urban central Denpasar, was that of Ibu's brother, by then about 80 years of age.

The two funerals were similar in their details. Family and friends/neighbours from the urban *banjar* packed out the small houseyard. The mandatory rites were carried out as usual, with the public washing of the bodies as usual the most moving aspect. This is

usually carried out by a high-*kasta* man, if one is available. In these two cases, a Brahmana affinal relative - my brother-in-law Gus Eka - was on hand to do the honours, including riding atop the funeral bier on its journey to the graveyard for cremation. This is a minor aspect where high *kasta* status is culturally acknowledged, with the participation of (particularly) a Brahmana deemed auspicious for the optimum dispatch of the soul of the departed.

More tellingly from the perspective of *kasta* status, a Brahmana *pedanda* high priest was always required to offer prayers at one stage of the funeral rites of any Balinese. An exception was the case of a few hard-line Pande commoner title-group sub-clans, as mentioned above. Untitled commoner families always used the services of a *pedanda*, and so at every funeral the religious basis of Brahmana *kasta* status was duly reinforced.

No *pedanda* is required to officiate or offer prayers at another common life-cycle ceremony - tooth-filing - although a *pedanda* can be involved if the ceremony is held at a more than basic level (that is, at the *madya* or even *utama* level, instead of the simple *nista* level). Again, this applies to Balinese of all status rankings. Commoners with the resources can and do stage lavish tooth-filings for family members, but many poor families make do with the basic set of offerings and rites to get the job done.

I did form the impression that poor high-status families, however, would make extraordinary efforts to put on at least a moderately lavish ceremony on such occasions, often by borrowing money, pawning goods, or even selling off family land holdings. Their high *kasta* status was for many in this situation an extra incentive to somehow overcome their impecunious state for the sake of appearances - an incentive that low-*kasta* families did not have to worry about.

My own tooth-filing, although unusual in that a *turis* was the subject, was an example of the kind of *nista* level ceremony that the poorest Balinese - usually untitled commoners - would undertake. In my case, the rite was performed early on the day of my *adat* customary wedding ceremony (which required that I have my teeth filed first). Only a handful of affinal relatives attended this part of the day's proceedings, plus a few neighbours keen to see how the foreigner would stand up to the rigours of having his upper front teeth filed.

In the event, the officiant was not too hard on me and his filing work was more symbolic than aesthetically motivated - although a certain amount of tooth enamel was certainly removed. Again, the theme of Brahmana religious efficacy was present in what would otherwise be a status-free ritual environment. The officiant doing the actual filing (called a *sangging*) was a local Brahmana man (not a priest) trained in the necessary

esoteric symbols traced on the teeth prior to filing and the correct incantations to be mumbled during the rite. These *sangging* were, as far as I could ascertain, always Brahmana.

I attended other life-cycle ritual of untitled commoner families, for example, the funeral of a young man from Sepenan Tengah *banjar* who was killed in a traffic accident in Java and brought back to the village for his *ngaben*. The family was evidently not wealthy and preparations were modest. Guests were welcomed with great politeness and good humour - despite the sad occasion. The basic refreshments of biscuits, sweet black coffee and clove cigarettes were offered to guests. All the basic funerary rites were performed. Without these, the soul of the departed would not make a clean break with his terrestrial abode - bad for him, and bad for his relatives, who might then have to deal with a tortured soul caught between this and the "unseen" (*niskala*) worlds.

As usual at funerals, the low *kasta* status of the deceased was marked by the sort of funeral bier (*bade*) used, but not by anything else of note. The degree of lavishness reflected in the houseyard decorations, standard of guest refreshments, and so on was a measure of the family's resources, rather than their status in the *kasta* hierarchy. And the number of guests, including *banjar* neighbours helping with the ritual details, was a measure of the family's standing in the *banjar* community and to a certain extent the popularity of the deceased. Again, status was not a relevant issue, particularly as funerals were primarily archetypal occasions for the expression of *banjar* community solidarity - as explored further in Chapter Six.

As I pointed out above, all of these ritual occasions were examples not of "commoner ritual" as opposed to "high-*kasta* ritual" but rather of Balinese ritual in which the families involved happened to be commoner/Sudra people with no claims to membership of a named clan group. That the families in question had no clan affiliation meant that they had to rely on their own resources if they sought to stage life-cycle ceremonies on a more lavish scale than strictly required.

Such families had the same call on *banjar* assistance as any other families in the community, whether from titled commoner groups or from *kasta* status-groups. But families with clan affiliations of course had the advantage of access to a wider group of relatives (broadly defined) to help in staging family ritual. If anything, the relative social "isolation" of the untitled commoner families meant that this was the category of citizen least able to seek achieved, as opposed to ascribed, status in the community.

Yet, as the case of the extravagant houseyard purification ceremony at the residence of my mother-in-law's relatives at Pemogan illustrated, untitled commoner families with

adequate resources can stage ritual to rival that of the traditional nobility. What they cannot do - as long as the *kasta* system remains strong - is utilise in their ritual the status-marking aspects reserved for the *kasta* elite. Of course, appropriation of such status-marking symbols by commoner groups represents a clear attack on the prerogatives of the status elite and, effectively, on the whole ideology of hierarchy. Organised commoner group activism, such as that of certain Pasek and Pande clans mentioned in Chapter One, or the Ngakan mentioned above, are cases in point. I will return to this issue of resistance to the status hierarchy in the concluding Chapter.

Discussion

None of the titled Sudra/commoner clan groups had anything like the high profile of the *kasta* groups, especially the Brahmana and higher (Anak Agung) Satria of the village. In the fieldsite *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja, only the Pasek *dadia* members mentioned above staged group ritual on a scale which gained them prominence, and an acknowledged solidarity, as (two) noticeably cohesive groups within the *banjar* social environment. This solidarity was not perceived by other *banjar* members as representing any sort of threat to *banjar* social or ritual integrity. The only established group which was so perceived, at least by some, was the *patus* Brahmana.

I even heard the term *patus jaba* on a few occasions. The term implied the existence of a separate *patus* association formed exclusively for non-*kasta* residents. Wayan Sadra, the *klian adat*, said that this was just a term referring to an informal agreement between Sudra *banjar* members in Sepenan Kaja to always attend each other's life cycle ceremonies not requiring mandatory *banjar* attendance and assistance (that is, every type of ritual except funerals). In other words, this *patus* was an exact analogue of the *patus* Brahmana already described. In practice, this alleged commoner *patus* never appeared as a separate group at any of the many family ritual events that I attended; nor did members hold regular meetings - unlike the *patus* Brahmana. There were certainly no "*patus* Sudra" T-shirts in evidence at any *banjar* events during the year that I lived in the village.

Overall, however, the picture of Sepenan village society that emerged after due enquiry was one in which membership of a named, hereditary group with some sort of claim to prestige was claimed by a considerable proportion of the populace. In Sepenan Kaja alone, a fairly cursory census revealed that at least half of the family heads (KK) had some *soroh* clan affiliation; the *klian adat*, Sadra, said that the true proportion was probably much higher - although he himself was not a member of any such clan. Clan membership was clearly an important element in the identity of members, although group

solidarity was stronger in some cases (Brahmana as a group, Satria Dalem - Anak Agung, Pande Besi, Pasek Pulosari, Ngakan, Manikan) than others. Such group solidarity had the potential to distract clan members from their allegiance to the ritual village (*desa adat*) and the *banjar* community in which members lived. In the case of the *kasta* clans, the ideology of hierarchical status clashed with the egalitarian communal ethos underpinning village and *banjar* solidarity. The following two Chapters examine the interplay of clan, *kasta*, and the value of communal egalitarianism, in first village and then *banjar* contexts.

Notes

¹ The Maha Ghotra Pasek Sanak Sapt Resi, founded in 1952 and renamed in 1972 (Pitana, 1996:2).

² To illustrate the often superfluous nature of genealogies in reckoning *soroh* membership, Guernonprez notes, in relation to a local group of Pande Besi (the "Blacksmith" clan), "[l]e groupe contemporain ne sait rien de son histoire, ce qui est la norme et non pas l'exception" (1987:27; my emphasis).

³ For example, Pitana (1996:28) acknowledges inter-group competitiveness in the construction and refurbishment of clan shrines at the mother-temple complex at Besakih. He records the expenditure of 342 million rupiah for construction of an annex (!) to the Pasek Sapt Rsi clan's shrine.

⁴ I quickly found that it was best to be very circumspect in conversations where I had an ulterior motive, such as the desire to ascertain a person's clan or *kasta* affiliations and their feelings about such links. In particular, *kasta* "privilege" was a sore point with some non-*kasta* people. It was safer, and more productive, to enquire discreetly after people's family and "origins" - details of clan membership, if applicable, would usually emerge with this approach.

⁵ Note that the title of Pasek was sometimes bestowed upon favoured court functionaries, and in some cases became patrilineally heritable by descendants of such officials. Other Pasek groups trace their origins back to the pre-Majapahit village officials mentioned in the text.

⁶ A Balinese scholar whose acquaintance I made via a Bali-oriented Internet mailing list stated clearly in one of his posted messages his indifference to claims to "traditional" status made by the high Satria (title: Anak Agung) *kasta* group of which he was a member. I have encountered this attitude in a few other people of similar status - they were always relatively young, and with a rather "global" perspective, rather than a village orientation. Despite their "modernist" outlook, however, these status dissidents generally still took an active role in the various religious or *adat* ceremonies in their areas - not as leaders as such, but as enthusiastic participants. They were clearly differentiating the issue of status and hereditary privilege - as superfluous traditional baggage smacking of feudalism - from the preservation and renewal of ritual ceremony, as part and parcel of the cosmological balance, in which context human pretensions to superiority were of little account.

⁷ Two village-level committees, established under government legislation, existed to facilitate villager participation in village administration, including the allocation of development funding from the central government. These were the LKMD and LMD, discussed further in Chapter Five.

⁸ The *puri* Jero Gede was actually located on the border between the two *banjar*. The decision for Gung Ngurah to officially join *banjar* Sepenan Tengah was made, he said, in order that both neighbouring *banjar* could have as a member someone from the *puri* associated with the *dinas* village leadership - his uncle at *banjar* SK and himself at Sepenan Tengah.

⁹ I refer the reader to the earlier discussion (Chapter Two) on the concept of purity in Bali, and the analogous concept in Hindu India. A rough indication of popular thinking about purity is conveyed by, for example, *adat* stipulations on the relatively short period that a Brahmana household is rendered ritually impure by a death in the family, compared to longer periods for the other *kasta* groups, and longer again for the Sudra or non-*kasta* households (Geertz and Geertz, 1975:116).

¹⁰ For example, a commoner enquiring as to whether a high priest had eaten, might ask, "Ratu pedanda sampun ngerayunan?", meaning approximately "Has the exalted high priest partaken of his repast yet?"

¹¹ We were legally married by the then Australian vice-consul in Sanur in 1990. Here I am referring to our *adat* wedding, considered necessary by my wife's relatives, to tie up some cosmological loose ends, for the benefit of the relationship.

¹² Brahmana clans are generally recognised as (in status order): Kemenuh, Manuaba, Keniten, and Mas (Geertz and Geertz, 1975:133).

¹³ These families were other Brahmana and the higher Satria families. Clearly, Triwangsa solidarity was at work here, as much as a demonstration by Aji of his ongoing commitment to the *banjar* community of his upbringing.

¹⁴ Reckoned by the number of "KK" (*kepala keluarga*, family head) registered with the village head's office, and displayed on small metal plaques fixed to the front gate of houseyards.

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Chapter Five. *Desa* : Village Solidarity and Status Exclusivity

This chapter examines the salience of the ideology and practice of village solidarity for Sepenan residents, and the intersection of status-group attitudes and practices - underpinned by elitist *kasta* ideology - with this solidarity. My observations and conversations with informants during a year's residence in the village convinced me that membership of the village community of Sepenan was, for most, a potent source of both spiritual fulfilment and civic pride for residents. This applied to villagers of all status rankings, Triwangsa or otherwise. I sought to determine the extent to which villagers actually did subscribe to an ideology of village solidarity; the extent to which such an ideology was egalitarian in nature; and - if indeed some idea of egalitarianism was a feature of the concept of "the village" - how villagers from high-status groups and their low-status neighbours reconciled the apparently conflicting values of hierarchy and egalitarianism.

I acknowledge that "village studies" have been out of favour in anthropology for some time. Outsider conceptualisations of physical village communities as self-contained social entities have generally given way to an awareness of the multiple connections and interactions (social, ritual, trading, bureaucratic, etc) that invariably exist between human settlements.

In the case of Bali, the Dutch colonial perspective of the *dorpsrepubliek* or self-sufficient, introverted Balinese "village republic" (summarised by Vickers, 1989:89ff) has been criticised by most authors on post-colonial Balinese society. These authors have noted the many and complex inter-regional ties which affect the great majority of Balinese villagers (among others Barth, 1993; Boon, 1977; Geertz and Geertz, 1975; C. Geertz, 1980; Howe, 1989; Guermonprez 1987; Lansing, 1983; Schulte Nordholt, 1996; Warren, 1993). And the indigenous *babad* genealogical/historical literature (Putra, 1993; Sueta, 1993; Sugriwa, 1956; Worseley, 1972; Creese, 1991) itself, with its epic accounts of great deeds by the ancestors at various named sites, shows clearly why so many Balinese are spiritually oriented to distant *kawitan* origin points, as well as to their village of residence¹. Recent fieldwork has provided further evidence for the salience of inter-regional ritual links for both individual families and whole villages (Reuter, 1996).

There has then been a swing away from an analytical focus on village communities, in favour of a much wider emphasis, as H. Schulte Nordholt put it:

... on peasants as a rural class, on vertical relations between the state and rural elites, on the articulation between penetrating capitalism and old labor relations in certain regional contexts, on the household as nuclear economic unit (1991:2).

"Relations between the state and rural elites" is certainly one of the themes of the following analysis of Sepenan village political and religious life. However, despite the trend against it, I have adopted a "village" focus for this chapter - precisely because village solidarity was obviously a conceptual reality for informants. This was clear, not only from informants' statements, but from the enthusiastic participation of villagers in the many greater and lesser rituals by which the *adat* village was affirmed and reconstructed. Villagers also expressed satisfaction over their belonging to the secular village, or *desa dinas*, especially when the village recorded achievements in district competitions between villages, as described below. Before presenting data illustrating the nature of an apparently egalitarian village solidarity and the implications for this of a significant presence in Sepenan of *kasta* hierarchical status-groups, a brief recap of the *adat/dinas* distinction might be useful.

Sepenan was both a relatively old *adat* and a very young *dinas* village (on the distinction, see also Warren, 1993:21). An *adat* village, it will be remembered, is a named settlement with more or less well defined physical boundaries and a set of three *kahyangan tiga* village temples. The *adat* village comprises one or more *banjar adat* subdivisions, depending on population size. The *adat* village of Sepenan had four *banjars*, as previously described. There is usually an honorary official (the *bendesa adat*) in charge of custom/*adat* matters concerning the village as a whole, while each *banjar* has its *klian adat* performing a similar service at *banjar* level. The positions are popularly elected and have no formal correlation with membership in either a Triwangsa or a non-*kasta* status-group.

Most *adat* villages, including Sepenan, have a set of written regulations for the spiritual and social good governance of the community, called *awig-awig*. The Balinese provincial government is in the process of standardising, simplifying, and "modernising" these indigenous regulations² - considered an overdue updating by some, and an unwarranted intrusion by a remote and monolithic bureaucracy by others.

A *dinas* village is one which has been recorded by the Indonesian government bureaucracy for the various administrative purposes of that bureaucracy (handling of village development projects, population statistics, identity cards and registration, etc). The village boundaries are set officially, in some cases (but not for Sepenan) resulting in anomalies where small, outlying habitation clusters belonging customarily to one *adat* village are assigned officially to a different but physically nearer *dinas* village. This kind of anomaly illustrates the gulf between *adat* (traditional, fundamentally religious, oriented inwards towards the community) and *dinas* ("modern", secular, and oriented externally

towards the higher echelons of the national bureaucracy) conceptions of what constitutes a village; and villagers must be prepared to shift between the two contexts in their daily lives. The existing *adat* village of Sepenan was officially incorporated as a *dinas* village of the same name only in 1989, as part of the gradual spread across the archipelago of the standardised Indonesian village administration system (Warren, 1993:247ff refers).

Each *dinas* village has a head or *kepala desa*; I have already mentioned the *kepala desa* of Sepenan, Gung Ngurah, who led a small staff of civil servants at the two-storey, whitewashed *kantor* (office) *kepala desa* across the road from his home, the Satria residence (*puri*) Jero Gede. Again, the traditional social status of the occupant of the post of village head is irrelevant - at least as far as the government regulations covering the matter are concerned. The village head is also popularly elected, from a small field of two or three candidates approved by the higher levels in the bureaucracy (the *kecamatan*/sub-district and *kabupaten*/district levels). As previously mentioned, the village head has part-time deputies in each *banjar* of the village (the *klian dinas*, who sees to government administrative matters in the same way that his *banjar* counterpart, the *klian adat*, sees to ritual matters). I refer below to the practical connection between traditional status and modern office (Section on "The *Dinas* Village"); I want first to illustrate the extent to which belonging to the village was a meaningful component in the identity of all residents of the *adat/dinas* village of Sepenan.

My contention is that it is the idea of "the village" which provided for Sepenan residents their primary sense of place within the wider world. At geographically greater scales, the communities to which most villagers feel they belong (the administrative district or *kabupaten*, then Bali, then Indonesia) are, to apply Anderson's famous expression on a smaller scale, "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983). Villagers who travel to the nearby town (the district capital) of Gianyar, or further afield, respond with the village name when asked where they are from. If far from home, they would add "Gianyar", for the benefit of interlocutors who would probably not know the village of Sepenan. To give instead the specific *banjar* name (in the case of my fieldsite, SK) would be superfluous and slightly puzzling to a stranger. One's *banjar* is a village-internal affair, relevant basically at the village level. To the rest of the world, the village is where one comes from.

The *banjar* however is the immediate community within which one lives and, at least before the advent of late twentieth century mobility, one also dies. I argue in the following chapter that the *banjar* provides its residents with their most cogent sense of community. The village, on the other hand, is one's address, within the ever widening contexts of Bali, of Indonesia, and of the world. The overlay of the *dinas* official legitimization of the existing village identity has only confirmed this sentiment in the "modern" arena. Villagers unified by their ritual support for the *kahyangan tiga* village temple set and the

tutelary deities housed there (the lion-like *barong* and his nemesis, the witch queen *rangda*) are now also unified in more prosaic, secular endeavours, such as inter-village rivalry in "most progressive village" competitions (*lomba desa*) and *gamelan* orchestra contests.

I lived among and interacted mainly with Sepenan Kaja *banjar* members, and I noted that as a rule they had minimal day-to-day interaction with fellow villagers from the other three *banjar* of Sepenan. Accordingly I formed the impression that villagers were oriented primarily to the secular and ritual concerns of their own *banjar* - not the village. At first I began to doubt the often-claimed spiritual significance of village membership (e.g. Goris, 1984b), encapsulated in ritualised devotion to deified village founders as expressed in cyclical rites at the three village temples already described.

However, more time and more discussions with informants convinced me that people indeed felt that they participated in a sort of generalised spiritual meaningfulness in belonging to Sepenan village. Very few of my informants could relate in a personal way to the village founders as their own ancestors (many present-day village families having roots in other parts of Bali). The main exception to this was the case of the Anak Agung families of the *puri* Jero Gede, the high Satria residence of SK; these families actually did trace their descent from the village founders, who were from the Dewa Manggis line of Gianyar.

Nevertheless, there was for villagers a certain generalised sanctity about the concept of the founders, who by being the first to settle on that piece of ground still, in a sense, owned the land on which the village sat. Homage was due to these "first settlers", and was duly paid at the *odalan* anniversaries of the village temples, especially the *pura puseh* at which the village founders were specifically venerated. Membership of Sepenan village was definitely important to residents, with a real spiritual dimension as well as the pragmatic reality of being an established dot on the map of the wider world.

In his seminal *Adatrecht van Bali*, Korn noted this spiritual dimension of village membership, involving villagers in a perceived obligation to honour the village founders, or, more generally, just "the gods". Given the persistence of animist sentiment which permeates Balinese relations with the landscape³, together with the strong orientation to honouring ancestors as illustrated in the following pages, Korn's conclusion about "the religious character of the Balinese village" (1932:80) seemed valid to me.

But from the perspective of traditional status, the question might be asked: did members of the traditional elite - the *kasta* groups - or indeed members of any of the other (low-*kasta*) title-groups who lived in Sepenan, relate to "the village" differently,

compared with the majority low-*kasta*/Sudra villagers who did not claim such status-group affiliation? In his (1990) paper espousing a Dumontian hierarchical analysis of a putative fundamental difference between *kasta* (Triwangsa) and other residents' relations to the village of residence, Guermonprez wrote:

A remarkable fact is that these three superior 'kinds' [the Triwangsa] shun the temples of the empirical villages where they reside. In other words, they do not recognise the *desa* as an encompassing ritual universe and, in this sense, they stand outside village society proper ... (1990b:77)

In the following sections, I describe some significant village-level scenarios of which I was an observer (and a participant of sorts), at which my specific interest was to note the extent and nature of participation by members of traditional elites. I was particularly interested to test the applicability, in my fieldsite village, of Geertz and Geertz's assertion (1975: 6-7), echoed above by Guermonprez, on the aloofness of high-*kasta* "gentry" from the allegedly pedestrian local devotions of the peasantry.

Adat Village Solidarity and High-status Group Involvement

The visit of the *barong* of Tojan - the village galvanised

Shortly after we had settled in to our accommodation at Gria Suci, I heard about a coming ritual event which would involve the whole village. The *barong* of a village called Tojan, some twenty kilometres further East along the coast, was going to "visit his brother", the *barong* of our village. It will be remembered that the *barong* is the village's protective deity, usually referred to respectfully as Ratu Gede. His spirit vehicle is the two-man costume often featured in tourist brochures, with a body of leather, painted and decorated with sequins, tiny mirrors, and gilt, and a head of carved and painted wood, in the shape of a fantastic lion (usually), with the bulging eyes and exaggerated fangs typical of Balinese masks portraying such potent and demonic figures.

The articulated wooden jaw was manipulated to produce a loud staccato clacking sound when the creature was activated on ceremonial occasions (by two volunteers who don the costume and are believed to be possessed by Ratu Gede). The *barong* is a benign creature, not really demonic himself, but he is up against some very malignant spiritual opponents, and in Bali, in these matters, one fights fire with fire - hence the fearsome

aspect of the protective *barong*. Hence also the mixture of awe and affection with which he is viewed by villagers.

For most of the (210 day) ritual year, the *barong* was usually stored quietly at the village's death temple (*pura dalem* - most closely linked, like the *barong* himself, with primordial spirituality), from which his spiritual protection emanated, covering the village. Approaching the annual *odalan* anniversary of the *pura dalem*, the *barong* was "re-energised" in two ceremonies, which I describe in the next section.

Fortunately for me, during my year of residence in Sepenan, the usual routine of the *odalan* celebrations (colourful and frenetic enough in themselves) was to be augmented by a rare ceremonial "visit" of the *barong* from the other village. This visit, which at first I assumed would be a rather insignificant event, turned out to be the most emotionally and spiritually charged event that I witnessed in the village. And, on the day, it seemed that every single resident of Sepenan took part in the proceedings.

I was told that the two *barong* were "brothers" because they (at least, the all-important head masks) were carved from the same piece of wood. Apparently the former *barong* of Sepenan was "greedy", in that he demanded (via the death temple's *pemangku* priest) continual, extravagant offerings. The village decided to "ritually decommission" him - in itself an interesting example of human boldness in the face of the powerful chthonian forces supposedly represented by the *barong*. This was duly done, and the partly-burned head of the old *barong* was subsequently washed up on the beach along the coast at Tojan. Residents of that village, so the story goes, refurbished the mask and made a new *barong*. They discovered the connection with Sepenan, and the fact that S's replacement *barong* had been carved from the same piece of wood as its predecessor. Since that time, it had become customary for the two "brother" *barongs* to visit from time to time. At the Sepenan end, the visits were organised by the village head of custom (*adat*) affairs, the *bendesa adat*, in consultation with Wayan Sadra and the other *klian adat* from the other three *banjar*. The *dinas* village administration handled practical issues such as liaison with local police, for traffic and crowd control.

I thought that two brothers making a friendly visit would not be a momentous affair, even if the brothers each represented, as it were, the distilled spiritual essence⁴ of their respective village communities. The intensity of the event, which started early one morning and reached a climax with the actual meeting of the two *barongs* on the road about two kilometres north of the Sepenan village boundary, took me by surprise.

Arriving at the meeting hall, on the asphalt road that neatly bisected the village, I saw a huge crowd of villagers, packing the hall (where it was shady) and also lining the road

for a kilometre or more to the South (where the other *banjars* of the village are located). Everyone was in *adat* costume, from octogenarians to toddlers.

One or two raised voices then signalled that some organisation was at last occurring. A small group of men, whose *adat* costumes, I noted, were in a couple of cases complemented by sophisticated mobile communications equipment, were coming up the road from the South, which was also the direction of the *pura dalem* death temple, the abode of the village *barong*. And Ratu Gede himself was indeed approaching, animated by two volunteers who had donned the *barong* costume at the death temple and duly became possessed by the *barong* deity.

He was accompanied by a small orchestra of village men playing various-sized gongs and cymbals. The music had a rhythmic monotony which would have been hypnotic had it not been so frenetic, with syncopated high speed clashing of the little *ceng-ceng* cymbals. In months to come I noted that this musical accompaniment is typical of ritual occasions, and is kept up for hours by the dedicated villagers who volunteer for the duty. The music certainly added to the religious but festive atmosphere of most of the Balinese ritual that I have witnessed - even funerals. On that occasion, our neighbours Gus Indra and Gus Agung (brother of Gus Oman - not Gus Agung the *sekwilda*), Dewa Sumpang, Wayan Dastra the builder and I Jatu (brother of Jero Rasman from our *gria*) were part of the orchestra. So also were two men from the large Pasek Pulosari houseyard located opposite the *banjar* meeting hall. Membership of a *kasta* status-group or a Sudra title-group was obviously irrelevant to musical participation in this pan-village *adat* event.

As the *barong* neared, the crowd around the meeting hall moved off up the road, in the direction of Gianyar town, forming a long procession. Perhaps two or three hundred people preceded the *barong* and his retinue, with hundreds more following, stretched out along the road as far as the eye could see. The small group of men who had organisational responsibility comprised Gung Aji Oka from S. Tengah, the *bendesa adat* (head of village *adat* affairs), and his local community equivalents, the *klian adat* from each of the four *banjars* of the village. Our (Sepenon Kaja) *klian dinas*, Gus Oman, was also a member of the organising group, although he had no official *adat* capacity (unlike Wayan Sadra, the SK *klian adat*). Also part of the group was Gung Ngurah, the *dinas* village head, although he did not play a leading role at this event.

The core group of organisers remained close to the *barong* as the procession moved along the road. I noticed several other local Brahmana people in the crowd, as well as representatives of Jero Gede, the high Satria residence, including Gung Kak Rangki, uncle of the village head and brother of the *pedanda istri* high priest of Gria Angkatan (who was the mother of Gus Oman). Many of the "lesser" Satria (title: Dewa and Desak) were also

present. The general atmosphere among the participants was one of excitement and anticipation. The *barong* did not so much walk as cavort along the road, dashing off to one side or the other, its wooden jaws clacking dramatically, and people shrinking back in apparent fear, lest the potent being get too close to them.

The mobile *gamelan* orchestra clanged and clashed on relentlessly. Not for the last time, I was reminded of Clifford Geertz's metaphor of the Balinese "theatre state". That day, however, I believe I saw neither "pomp" nor "power" on display. Rather, I witnessed the exuberant and highly committed participation of virtually the whole village in a unifying ritual that required neither prestigious leaders nor high priests for its execution (no Brahmana *pedanda* high priest was involved) - only a handful of organisers, there basically to coordinate the timing of the event and to handle liaison with the traffic police.

The tempo picked up further as we reached the outskirts of Gianyar town. I ran ahead (my wife was somewhere back in the crowd, chatting with old acquaintances as one did on such occasions). I knew that we, meaning "our" *barong* and his followers (the villagers of Sepenan), were to meet the *barong* from Tojan and his retinue, somewhere along the road. From the police roadblocks, evident once the vanguard of our procession arrived in Gianyar, and the rising excitement of those around me, it looked like the meeting of the two *barongs* was imminent.

The purpose of the hand-held radios used by the *klian adat* organisers then became apparent. The Tojan contingent also had radios, and they were being used to coordinate the progress of the two processions along their respective routes. On this occasion, the Tojan villagers had the worst of the bargain, having to march over 20 kilometres under a hot sun, compared with only some three kilometres for ourselves. The plan was for the two groups to meet at the Gianyar *alun-alun*, the large town square. The large open area would allow a massing of people without the dangers of undue crowding.

With a fine sense of theatricality, the march organisers adjusted the relative pace of the two processions so that they indeed met exactly at the town square. In the minutes before their meeting, the two *barong* had advanced through the ranks of their respective followers until they were at the forefront. Our contingent arrived, from the South, just before the Tojan *barong* appeared, emerging from a city street, from the West.

There was a palpable anticipation among the crowd around our *barong*. Some had climbed trees for a better view - and perhaps to keep out of the way, I later thought. Tension between the *klian adat* was such that lively arguments broke out among them, relating to the timing and positioning of the climactic moment of the actual meeting of the

two sacred creatures. It was by then obvious to me that this was very different from the routine temple prayers and holy water sprinkling to which I had, at that stage, been exposed. Although nobody was threatening anybody, I even became apprehensive about my personal safety, purely from the general state of agitation of people around me.

When the other *barong* at last appeared, at the head of his own retinue, across the square, some two hundred metres away, a huge roar erupted from the Sepenan villagers. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck. The two groups raced headlong towards each other, shouting wildly. I thought that this must have been how battles were joined in the feudal Bali of not so long ago.

The controlled emotion which had characterised the procession until that point immediately gave way, in the case of a few individuals, to quite uninhibited behaviour, of a kind I later came to recognise as a "possession" syndrome (*kerauhan*) typical of major sacred ceremonial occasions⁵. The two *barong* greeted each other by jumping wildly around in a circle, as their respective followers met and began to mingle together. The *barongs* then moved off, back in the direction from which we had come - the Tojan *barong* was on this occasion the honoured guest of our *barong*, and would be spending some days with him at our death temple.

As soon as we started on the (for us) return journey towards Sepenan village, individuals from both contingents became possessed (by the spirit of one or other of the *barong*). They numbered only a few dozen out of perhaps two thousand or more participants, but the effect was certainly dramatic. Those affected (mostly males, mostly young adults) would suddenly start screaming and flailing about, with faces distorted by extreme emotion, sometimes sobbing or crying hard. Some threw themselves on the ground, writhing around. Others attacked people unlucky enough to be nearby. The procession organisers were kept busy directing the more level-headed in the crowd in restraining the possessed ones. At that stage of my fieldwork I had never seen anything like it, and was mightily impressed, not to say a little concerned as to how it would all finish up. The possessed each required three or four people to subdue them and hold them until the possession syndrome passed off - usually not more than a few minutes.

These dramatic incidents were happening sporadically through the crowd, but occurred particularly among people who were very close to the two *barong*. It was as if the very proximity of such spiritual potency was enough to trigger the possession reaction in individuals who, for whatever reasons, were susceptible. I witnessed the same phenomenon at another, larger ceremony in the capital (the *odalan* of the Pengerebongan temple in Kesiman), where people in possession trance turned wavy-bladed *kris* daggers upon themselves.

On this occasion, perhaps fortunately, nobody had brought their *kris* along. And, as the now combined procession slowly made its way back down the road to Sepenan, the atmosphere gradually eased, with fewer and fewer people going into spontaneous trance. By the time the *barongs* were safely ensconced in the death temple, a positive camaraderie had supplanted the extreme agitation and wild scenes of an hour or two earlier. The *klian adat*, Sadra, and *klian dinas*, Gus Oman, of Sepenan Kaja, which was "hosting" the Tojan *barong*'s visit on behalf of the whole village (because the death temple was on SK territory), were relieved and pleased that everything had gone off well.

That evening, over coffee at our *gria*, the two men and several other neighbours all agreed that the Tojan *barong*'s visit was a great success. I noted the camaraderie between the high-*kasta* (Brahmana) *klian dinas* and the low-*kasta* *klian adat*. Gus Oman and Dayu Tu Suwati agreed that the day's proceedings represented a village *adat* affair where the various status-groups had nothing special to contribute, apart from their enthusiasm. Members of these groups took part purely as Sepenan villagers, with a common aim of demonstrating through the large turnout and exuberant participation that Sepenan was second to none in maintaining such traditional *adat* practices. This rather unique occasion, involving a magical-religious "confrontation" between the *barong* icons of the two villages, unified the *krama desa* (*adat* village population) of Sepenan in a very overt manner. There was no particular role for high-status groups to play in the proceedings. Notably, the services of a Brahmana *pedanda* were not required to "close" (*muput*) the event - unlike the village temple *odalan* rites described below.

However, the enthusiastic participation of so many individual villagers who happened to belong to the high-status groups certainly undermined any view of aloofness of such groups from *adat* village-focused devotions. The primordial *adat* event of the Tojan *barong*'s visit was directed largely by the village's *adat* leadership - the village *bendesa adat* and the four *klian adat* from the village's four *banjar*. The big turnout of high-status individuals, on that occasion under the direction of *adat* leaders, was a clear demonstration of the importance of *adat* village solidarity to the *kasta* groups of Sepenan. The same applied to the Sudra title-groups (Pasek, Pande, Ngakan, and Manikan) represented in the village, many of whose members were active participants in the event.

The women's gamelan orchestra district competition

During my stay in Sepenan I was fortunate enough to observe aspects of a district competition held to determine the champion women's gamelan orchestra. This was a case of a basically *adat* pursuit, organised as a competition through the *dinas* district

administrative hierarchy. Village pride was definitely at stake, and status took a back seat to village solidarity in this context too.

One December evening, the sounds of gamelan practice emanating from the small hall beside the *banjar* meeting hall (well within earshot of our *gria*) were rather more discordant than usual. I took a walk up to the hall to investigate. I had been accustomed to seeing only men playing gamelan instruments, so I was surprised to see a full orchestra of women, practising under the tutelage of an experienced musician from the neighbouring *banjar*.

I was then informed of the district-wide competition. Women's gamelans from most villages in the district would be competing. Over the following two months or so, the gamelan practised several nights each week. Most of the women were beginners (hence their initial discordance). The standard of their playing steadily improved - noticeable even to my foreign ears. I noted that women from all status rankings participated. A woman from the *Satria puri* of Sepenan Tengah was one of the two principal *kendang* drummers, and Wayan Asri from Sepenan Kelod played the other drum. Our friend and neighbour Desak Latri played the *gender* metallophone. She said that a modicum of talent and enthusiasm to represent the village were the only relevant criteria.

On the night of the final "play-off", the Sepenan orchestra was one of the two finalists to perform at the Gianyar city hall. A large crowd gathered in anticipation of some good entertainment - entirely traditional in nature, and apparently still of interest to many, including a good turnout of young people. A large contingent of Sepenan people came to support their "team".

Rows of chairs were arranged in the centre of the auditorium, occupied by invited guests. Prominent in the front row was Gus Agung Sudira, District Secretary (*sekwilda*) of Gianyar District and notable S resident. The District Head (*bupati*) did not attend, making Gus Agung the senior representative of the bureaucracy in attendance.

The Sepenan gamelan appeared first, giving quite a professional performance, I thought. This view was shared by the Sepenan contingent - connoisseurs all, apparently - which greeted each flourish and nuance of the playing with roars and shrieks of approval. Whether this was entirely spontaneous, or to some extent designed to influence the judges sitting in the front row of the audience, I could not tell.

The opposition gamelan, from a village in the northeast of the district, then took their turn, and gave an equally polished performance. By their reactions, the partisan Sepenan crowd clearly thought that the rival gamelan's theatrical flourishes were a trifle melodramatic, verging on self-parody at times. Unfortunately for the Sepenan orchestra

and their supporters, the judges awarded the championship to their rivals. The Sepenan women's gamelan, as runners-up in a large field of competitors, were however far from disgraced. In some two months, Sepenan women of all status backgrounds had through diligent practice brought themselves to a high standard of musicianship and nearly won the district championship.

In the process, the status of high-*kasta* women in the orchestra was practically elided in the gamelan context. For example, all women sat (on the floor) at the same height. Lead roles in the orchestra were allocated on merit (the woman from *puri* Jero Tengah had previously demonstrated her ability in this field). This was also the case with the men's gamelan, as I noted on other occasions. That is, the village gamelans were prime examples of the *seka* principle, whereby villagers met for the enjoyment of doing something worthwhile together. In such contexts, solidarity was the goal, and the potentially divisive issue of status was greatly attenuated.

In the case of the women's gamelan competition, village solidarity and identity vis-à-vis other villages in the district was another important motivation. Desak Latri made this quite clear. Village pride was at stake, and the chance to win the prestigious district competition was sufficient motivation for those women with musical talent to work hard towards this goal. As I lived nearby, I had often watched the women practising. There was an easy familiarity between them, with plenty of hilarity and good-natured teasing when someone hit the wrong note.

This applied equally to orchestra members of all status rankings. As usual, *kasta* titles were always used, and, as far as I could tell, appropriate language registers employed. In this respect, status was never entirely absent from any egalitarian context that otherwise militated against the assertion of the status hierarchy. But the primary objective of improving their playing standard (while also enjoying themselves) was clearly the gamelan group's focus. And their efforts were an expression of village solidarity, taking clear precedence in that context over the inherently divisive issue of status-group solidarity.

Status Tensions and Ambiguities in *adat* Village Ritual

I have already mentioned the fact that many families resident in Sepenan, both high-*kasta* and otherwise, traced their origins to other parts of Bali. Devotion to family or clan ancestors was demonstrated by these villagers through the upkeep of origin shrines (*kawitan*) and attendance at ceremonies (particularly shrine *odalan* or anniversary rites), wherever in Bali these shrines may have been. However, religious obligations to the village

founders and "the gods" of the local landscape were well discharged in Sepenan. The following sections describe some of the more impressive "whole village" ritual devotions that I was privileged to attend during my stay there. High-*kasta* people took part on most of these occasions, but not all. From the viewpoint of the necessity to honour (and placate) the local gods (and the troublesome *buta* and *kala* spirits), at least, all permanent residents had a general obligation to support the important cyclic rites associated with the village religious icons - the three-temple set, and the village *barong*. I was therefore interested to see whether status issues in any way conflicted with this fundamental, territory-based religious devotion.

Ratu Gede tours the village

After I had been in the village for some months, the major annual Balinese festival of Galungan-Kuningan came around. Tall, arching banners on long bamboo poles (*penjor*) stood beside the entrance of every houseyard. Our neighbour, Sadra, the *klian adat* of the *banjar*, dropped in for a chat on the day before Galungan, and told me that there would be an important ritual at the *pura dalem* death temple that night. I was told to be ready, in full *adat* costume (with a *kris* dagger stuck down the back of my sarong), and he would call for me about 10 pm. I knew only that it involved the village *barong*, Ratu Gede.

I did not have, and could not beg or borrow a *kris* anywhere on such short notice, but I was otherwise ready when Sadra called for me that night. A group of several dozen men was gathered at the *banjar* meeting hall - Wena and Wayan Dastra among them. All wore *adat* costume. Several had brought the various smaller gongs and cymbals, plus one larger gong carried on a pole between two men, that comprised the "mobile gamelan" that I had often noticed accompanying ritual processions. Gus Oman, the *klian dinas* and prominent Brahmana, was there, along with several other Brahmana of the *banjar*. The Satria were also well-represented - not only the "lesser Satria" (title: Dewa) but also representatives from Jero Gede, the high-ranking Satria residence of the *banjar*. The two women present carried *banten* offerings.

This group then walked the one-kilometre journey down the sealed main road to the turn-off leading to the village death temple. About a hundred men were already gathered inside the temple, smoking clove cigarettes and chatting - although I noticed that there was a rather more subdued atmosphere than what I had come to expect on such ritual occasions.

At a certain point, Jero Mangku, the death temple's priest, called the congregation to order, and we all arranged ourselves in rows, sitting cross-legged and facing the *barong* and two *rangda* witch-queen costumes, already donned by volunteer villagers, standing together in the inner courtyard of the temple. Led by the *pemangku*, we prayed briefly to these three figures. No special concessions were made, such as in seating position or relative height, to the status of the high-*kasta* villagers present. Beli Sadra said that the congregation gathered there, at that moment, was simply representing all the humans that inhabited the village. And the outlandish figures of the *barong* and the two *rangda*, standing stock-still under a near-full moon, around midnight, in a setting that could hardly have been more theatrically dramatic, represented something quite different.

Opinions as to what they actually did represent varied with the relative sophistication of informants. Some, probably most, villagers were content to turn up at such events when organised because "we do this every year" and "it's part of our *adat*" - in C. Geertz's words, quoted in Chapter One, they were concerned with "orthopraxy, not orthodoxy". Others, such as Gus Oman and Sadra, took a greater interest in village cosmology. For them, the *barong* and the *rangda* represented the denizens of the unseen *niskala* realm and, more generally, the magical aspects of village life; not so much a simplistic "good versus evil" dichotomy as a kind of complementary "Yin and Yang" of the magical potency with which the world is imbued. We had gathered that night to awaken that potency, acknowledge it, and pay it due homage.

A splash of *tirta* holy water by the priest brought the *barong* and the *rangdas* to life. They were led in a short procession out of the temple and across to the nearby cremation-ground and cemetery, accompanied by the mobile gamelan. There, the priest conducted further prayers before the three supernatural beings, against the eerie backdrop of silhouetted tombstones and the burnt-out remains of recent cremation towers. After this, we all returned to the death temple, where the *barong* and *rangda* costumes, now bereft of their human animators, were installed in one of the pavilions of the temple's inner courtyard. Some thirty men stayed on guard there overnight - more a matter of piety than of anticipation of any trouble from thieves - and the rest of us walked slowly home.

The reason for "waking" the *barong* was that he was to make his annual tour of the village during the Galungan-Kuningan festival, which started on the day following the *barong's* spiritual recharging just described. The first day of the festival, simply called Galungan, was a relatively low-key affair. There was some preparation of special dishes such as *lawar*⁶, and special prayers at the houseyard shrine, but no organised village- or *banjar*-level activities.

The *barong* was scheduled to make his tour the next day, and I had mentioned to people that I wanted to observe this event, and record it on video. I was immediately informed that Sepenan's *barong* was a particularly potent creature and, because of this, nobody had ever been able to photograph him. Previous attempts had always resulted in jammed camera shutters or ruined negatives. If I wanted to try to film this *barong*, I was warned, I had to go down to the death temple and pray for his permission to do so. My wife and I happily complied with this suggestion, making a special trip to the temple that day, duly attired in *adat* costume, for the purpose.

The following morning I went down to the temple, again appropriately dressed, with a compact video camera carried in what I hoped was an unobtrusive manner. (I always felt that using the video camera immediately destroyed any semblance of actual "participation" by myself in what was going on around me - despite the fact that, these days, many Balinese themselves take photographs, and even video recordings, of ceremonies at which they are certainly participants.)

The four *banjar* of Sepenan village took turns at hosting the death temple's annual *odalan* "birthday" ceremonies and escorting the *barong* in his annual village tour. It happened that it was Sepenan Kaja's turn for these duties when I was living there, and so I recognised many of the people already gathered outside the temple when I arrived. The mobile gamelan orchestra was already in action, albeit in a rather sedate fashion at that stage.

When a fair crowd had gathered, we entered the temple precinct and, without much ceremony, the *barong* was brought down from his resting place, two young men got inside the rather large and heavy costume (about the size of a large bull), and the *barong* and his retinue (*pengiring*) proceeded out of the temple and up the short dirt track to the main road, with the gamelan group bringing up the rear. I noted that the music had become more frenetic, the rapid syncopation of the clashing mini-cymbals contrasting with the relentless, measured heartbeat of the single large gong.

The *barong*'s tour began in earnest when we reached the asphalt road that runs through the village. The pattern was quickly established: the *barong*, in the centre of a crowd of mostly Sepenan Kaja people (including the gamelan musicians), would walk along the road for some minutes before making one of his many "stops". At each stop, he would prance or cavort about briefly, his wooden jaws clacking loudly and his head tossing wildly - and the gamelan would increase the tempo of its accompaniment.

Villagers came out from their houseyards when they heard the *barong*'s approach, and sat or squatted respectfully by the roadside as he neared. Only members of his retinue

would dare to stand, as their duties required, at the same height as the venerable creature; the rest of us made sure that we were physically much lower than the *barong*. This of course reflected our relative status as mere mortals in the presence of a far more potent entity.

When the *barong* stopped on his journey, villagers waiting nearby would quickly rise and approach one of the retinue (they were all men⁷), a man carrying a large leather bag with a strap over one shoulder. He was acting as treasurer, and villagers were expected to contribute to the coffers of the *adat* village by making a donation (*maturan*) appropriate to their means when Ratu Gede passed by.

The *barong's* tour continued in this way for several hours, under the hot tropical sun. Occasionally, the two young men who were the *barong's* animators (indeed, the vehicles of his actual spirit while they were under the heavy leather and cloth costume) would be relieved by a fresh duo of volunteers. Such work was not taken lightly, as "possession" by divine entities was regarded as an honour but also as being extremely exhausting. There was even some risk of death. It was not a question of malevolent intent by, in this case, the *barong*. Rather, the sheer spiritual potency of the creature was orders of magnitude greater than that of individual humans, and could therefore unwittingly extinguish a human soul "as easily as a strong gust of wind blows out a candle flame", as an informant put it.

The same idea was put to me as being behind the elaborate preparations required for the ordination of a *pedanda* high priest. Such priests, when preparing *tirta* holy water, become the vehicles of Siwa, a manifestation of supreme Godhead. Only humans thoroughly prepared by rigorous training and holding the necessary secret knowledge could hope to withstand the spiritual impact of possession by such a potent being (Rubinstein, 1991:60).

When the whole village had been blessed by the *barong's* visit, and a substantial sum of money collected for use in funding future *adat* village ceremonies (mainly *kahyangan tiga* village temple *odalan* celebrations), the procession returned to the death temple, where the *barong* was re-installed in his place of honour in the inner courtyard.

From my observations, the social status of the men who made up the *barong's* retinue was irrelevant. Several Brahmana men were in the retinue, but this was simply because it was Sepenan Kaja's turn to escort the *barong* on his tour that year, and quite a few Brahmana lived in that *banjar*. Satria men also took part. Sadra, the (Sudra) *klian adat* of the *banjar*, played a prominent role in proceedings, although there was not much to do during the tour for the *barong's* entourage. Sadra was the one who signalled when the

barong should stop along his way and perform a brief dance, before moving on to the next stop. Gus Oman, the current SK *klian dinas* but also a former *klian adat* himself, was also prominent in the vanguard of the group, but took no leadership role.

For me, the *barong*'s "awakening" and village tour, like the visit of the "out-of-town" *barong* previously described, represented quintessentially "indigenous *adat*" events, where potent chthonian forces were in play. At the events of this nature that I witnessed, at least, villagers participated without regard for the social status of participants. The *barong*, in particular, seemed to be a kind of powerful spiritual mascot; ritual involving him unified villagers as, I believe, mere mortals under his benevolent protection. The social status of some villagers did not free them from the need for this protection; they still lived on terrain inhabited by the unseen forces of the *niskala* realm. These forces could impact on anyone; after all, members of high-status families were observed to suffer their fair share of misfortune and malady, often attributed to the anger of slighted denizens of the unseen realm. Paying due attention and respect to these entities was the basic purpose of such *adat* ritual.

Hence the wholehearted participation by villagers of all status rankings in this kind of "native", pre-Hindu ritual. In such contexts, the group of reference for villagers was clearly "the village", in its magical/religious dimension; that is, the *adat* village. And this dimension made the status differences of villagers largely irrelevant.

There was however one factor not consistent with my provisional analysis of a status-free *adat* ritual context in S. The village *barong* was kept at the death temple during the six-week period from his village tour until after the death temple's anniversary celebrations. But after that, he was moved to the large shrine (*merajan agung*) of Jero Gede, the senior Satria residence. I learned that this was the *barong*'s usual abode for most of the year, and had been for some years. Did this arrangement indicate the intrusion of an element of Satria *kasta* status, after all, on the status-free *adat* village idea-value that had seemed so compelling to me in the death temple and cemetery on the night the *barong* and the two *rangda* were "awoken"?

Informants said that, theoretically, the *barong* should indeed reside at the death temple, but there was a pragmatic necessity to ensure that the gold decorations of his mask were not stolen - which would constitute a major ritual defilement and necessitate an expensive purification rite. This sacrilege was seen as a distinct possibility at a time when many people not so vulnerable to retribution from the unseen realm (that is, non-Balinese thieves) were about. And the death temple happened to be situated in a quiet, uninhabited part of the village, surrounded by *sawah* ricefields and hidden by a grove of tall trees. Often deserted at night, it was considered an easy target for itinerant thieves eager for the

gold and prepared to risk swift retribution at the hands of a crowd of enraged locals if caught in the act.

The *barong* therefore had to be kept somewhere safer - a densely inhabited part of the village, with good high walls to discourage thieves. There were a number of suitable places, but Jero Gede was preferred. The village foundation temple (*pura puseh*) and village congregation temple (*pura desa*) - in Sepenan combined at the one site - would have been suitable, except that that site was also relatively isolated. The large Satria shrine behind Jero Gede, on the other hand, was on a well-lit section of the main road and was surrounded by houseyards. There were people coming and going almost around the clock.

Furthermore, it was explained to me, the residence and family shrine of the former local lords was widely accepted as standing for the whole village. Keeping the *barong* at anyone else's "private" shrine would make no sense - who else could have claimed such an honour? It would have amounted to dangerous hubris. Brahmana households, of which there was no shortage, of course enjoyed even higher *kasta* status than the Satria residence (*puri*) Jero Gede. However, no Brahmana *gria*, even the largest, "represented" the village in the way that Jero Gede did. The feudal era may have officially ended with Indonesian independence, but the identification of the *puri* with "the village" for the purpose of the *barong's* safe-keeping was a potent indicator of the continuation of high Satria *kasta* status in the estimation of villagers.

As far as I could determine, nobody objected to this arrangement. Far from maintaining any aloofness from the animistic devotions of which the primordial *barong* was the village's primary symbol, the Satria of Jero Gede opened their family shrine to the *barong* and took part in his ritual. In the process, the putatively egalitarian concept of the *adat* village of Sepenan - as constructed through the kind of rites just described - compromised with hierarchical status, as exemplified by the acknowledgment by villagers of the iconic status of the Satria *puri*.

Village temple *odalan* anniversaries

The term *odalan* refers to the annual anniversary (in the Balinese 210-day ritual calendar) of any temple or shrine, from the huge "mother temple" complex at Besakih to the most humble family shrine. Even "modern" suburban-style houses on tiny blocks of land, located on the fringes of the larger towns and cities, will have a small shrine in the most auspicious corner of the block, nearest the sacred mountain Gunung Agung. Urban houses with no spare land will often build the shrine on the roof, again in the most

auspicious corner. But wherever built, the *odalan* of each shrine should be (and usually is) celebrated on the correct day each year. Dereliction of this duty risks the wrath of offended ancestors.

This is all the more so in the case of the *odalan* of any of the three-temple (*kahyangan tiga*) set of village temples. Accordingly, *odalan* for these temples are relatively grand affairs, with much preparation and mass participation by villagers. Deified ancestors - in a more general sense in the case of such "whole-village" temples - are invited to descend and stay a while (three days, in Sepenan) at the temple. There, they are feted with lavish *banten* offerings, paid homage with respectful prayer, entertained with appropriate traditional dancing, and finally invited to return to their lofty abode - hopefully, pleased with the standard of the reception they received.

As it was Sepenan Kaja's turn, among the four *banjar* of the village, to stage the *odalan* of the *pura dalem* death temple, our *banjar* was quite preoccupied with preparations for some weeks before the big event. On the morning of the first day of the three days of celebrations, women in our *gria* (Brahmana houseyard) were busy constructing one-metre high towers of neatly-arranged fruit and flower *banten* on ornate stands, to be taken in procession to the *pura dalem*. The same activity was going on in many other houseyards.

Later that morning, everyone put on their best *adat* costume and proceeded to congregate at the *bale banjar* meeting hall, in response to a summons "broadcast" by someone beating the *kul-kul*, the large wooden slit gong that hung in its own pavilion next to the *bale banjar*. When all seemed to be present, the procession formed up and moved off at a leisurely pace down the familiar route, along the asphalt road, to the turn-off to the temple. As well as the Sudra majority, including representatives of the Pasek and Pande clans, people from all the high-*kasta* groups were present.

A small group of children led the way, proudly holding long staffs, with pennants fluttering in the breeze. The children all wore exactly the same costumes as their parents. Behind them, an impressively long line of women stretched for perhaps half a kilometre, making a fabulous sight as they walked, single file, resplendent in colourful sarongs and *kebaya* blouses. Each carried one of the tall, heavy *banten* just mentioned, balanced on small cloth pads placed on their heads. There were several Satria women (title: Desak) among them, but I did not note anyone from Jero Gede (i.e. the high Satria, Anak Agung) or any Brahmana women in the procession. Certainly the great majority of them were Sudra women.

The men followed behind the long procession of women bearing the *banten* offerings. Most of the men wore white "safari" jackets over their coloured sarongs and golden yellow *saput*, a heavy cloth shorter than, and worn over, the sarong. All the men and boys wore the standard *adat* headdress, the *udeng* (high register: *destar*). There was no variation in clothing, either in specific detail or general degree of resplendence, which might have marked status differences between villagers.

The usual "walking gamelan" brought up the rear. The musicians were the familiar faces from SK *banjar's seka gong*, the volunteer gamelan group which practised weekly in a small hall beside the *banjar* meeting hall. Behind the whole procession walked a solitary figure - an old man dressed all in white, casually smoking a clove cigarette as he strolled along. This was Jero Mangku - evidently in no hurry to commence proceedings at the temple towards which we were then all heading.

I hurried down the road, overtaking the procession, to record some video footage of the stunning spectacle as the vanguard arrived at the temple. Villagers from the other three *banjars* were already waiting, outside the temple gate and just inside, in the large forecourt with its open-sided but roofed *wantilan* pavilion. This pavilion was the site of *adat*-sanctioned (and therefore not illegal) cockfights held in conjunction with religious ceremonies requiring, as many do, the spilling of blood as an offering (*mecaru*) to the potentially troublesome *buta* and *kala* spirits.

The *wantilan* and forecourt were packed to capacity as the long procession from SK arrived and participants continued straight on into the inner courtyard of the temple, where the women were relieved of the heavy *banten* offerings that they had carried all the way on their heads. The offerings were arranged neatly in the concreted courtyard, before the line of shrines sited along the temple's eastern and northern walls (as usual, in the direction of Gunung Agung).

The old *pemangku* temple priest indeed did not seem to have too many duties to occupy him - unlike the ritual when the *barong* was "awoken", when the *pemangku's* role was central. Sometimes, at the temple *odalan*, he would splash *tirta* holy water over groups of people sitting on the concrete floor in prayer, then dispense more *tirta* to each individual in such groups. Each person would accept a small amount in cupped hands and drink it, three times. The water had a smoky taste, apparently derived from the *sandat* and *cempaka* flowers routinely dropped into newly-blessed *tirta*. I noticed however that a priest was not required for this particular service; anyone could serve as *tirta* dispenser on such occasions.

The scene in the temple inner courtyard was a lively and colourful one, with hundreds of elegantly-dressed villagers taking turns to pray in groups of a dozen or so. Each group took only a few minutes to complete this brief devotion, before getting down to some concerted socialising with other villagers. This took place, for most, within the temple's inner sanctum. There was no feeling that one should perhaps go outside for such secular pursuits, nor did people seem to feel the sort of hushed awe that Westerners often feel inside Christian churches. At a certain point, a group of women began a sacred song-chant (*mekidung*), creating a haunting aural ambience. Jero Rasman was one of the choir.

While this singing continued I wandered over to a less-crowded corner of the temple - in fact, the north-east corner, behind the tall *padmasana* statue. There were a number of faces that I recognised, sitting in partial shade along a low wall. Most were SK people whom I knew well by then. After chatting to various people in that group for a while, it dawned on me that all of them, children included, were Brahmana. At the time, I thought it was probably a coincidence.

A short time later, my father-in-law (Aji) decided that it was time for our family group to offer prayers and take holy water, as so many others had done, or would be doing, over the three days of the temple's *odalan*. Accordingly, our group took up a position on the concrete and performed the brief *muspa* prayer rite that became so familiar to me. Our group consisted of Aji, his second wife and their four children, his first wife (my wife's mother), along with my wife and myself. My wife's four full siblings were not there, although I was assured that they would all be calling in to the temple at some time during the three days to pay their respects.

I noticed that our group (all Brahmana except my mother-in-law and myself) had taken a position for prayers just in front of the *padmasana* statue. This statue was a representation of the Hindu cosmology: twin *naga* snake-dragons supporting a raised *pelinggih* god-seat, the whole resting on the world turtle Bedawang Nala. The statue, where present, given pride of place in the most auspicious corner of temples everywhere, represented God as the Supreme Being, Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. This concept of Godhead transcended all notions of deified ancestors of particular groups and individuals, and of particular spirits, benevolent or otherwise. This, incidentally, was also the God acceptable in terms of the monotheistic Indonesian state ideology, Pancasila.

Praying before this symbol, a Balinese would not be paying homage to anyone's ancestors in particular. Hence, members of a status-group that regarded itself as ideologically superior to all others could "safely" pray publicly before a *padmasana*. They would not be showing deference to the ancestors of people of lower status, thereby

compromising their own status. (Hobart (1978:15) found a similar rationale advanced by high-*kasta* villagers at his fieldsite).

And this, I discovered, was why the Brahmana group to which I was temporarily attached chose to pray publicly only at the death temple *odalan*. It transpired that participation in village-focused *adat* ceremonies generally presented no problems for high-*kasta* people, even Brahmana. But, in Sepenan at least, local Brahmana were not prepared to be seen to pay homage to non-Brahmana ancestors by actually praying before shrines dedicated to any non-Brahmana forebears. The fact that such forebears had the status of gods (*bhatara*), moreover gods specifically invited down to the temple for the occasion, made no difference to this stance. But praying to the Supreme God, represented by the *padmasana*, allowed Brahmana people to avoid this "problem", and take an active part in the death temple's anniversary celebrations.

However, the combined *pura puseh/pura desa* - the other two temples of the village's *kahyangan tiga set* - had no *padmasana*. When the *odalan* for this twin temple came around, none of my Brahmana relatives or neighbours attended. Our (Brahmana) neighbour Dayu Tu Suwati told me about the historical background to the absence of a *padmasana* in the *pura puseh/pura desa* temples. I mentioned this in the previous chapter. Briefly, some twenty years beforehand, local Brahmana had been quite prepared to participate in this *odalan* too, providing that a *padmasana* could be erected in the twin temple grounds. Dayu Tu said that this was seen by a majority of other villagers as an excessive intrusion of divisive and basically irrelevant *kasta* status into the realm of village religious solidarity, and the *padmasana* was never built. Since that time, the Brahmana as a group had not participated⁸ in the *odalan* ceremonies for the temple pair that, above all, symbolised the religious congregation that was the *adat* village of Sepenan.

There was nevertheless one important element of Brahmana participation in the village temples' *odalans*: these three-day rituals were always "opened" and "closed" by our neighbour the Brahmana *pedanda istri* high priest. I missed her officiation at these *odalans*, but was assured that she always performed this duty. Informants said that a *pedanda*'s officiation was necessary to the successful conduct of the *odalan*. The high priest's intercession was believed to be necessary to ensure that the gods accepted the invitation of the villagers to descend and stay awhile with them - and to peacefully depart for the unseen realm at the conclusion of the *odalan*. In this respect, public acceptance of the *pedanda*'s role reinforced Brahmana *kasta* status in the context of village-focused *adat* ritual, thereby eroding the putatively egalitarian nature of *desa adat* village solidarity as expressed through most aspects of such ritual.

Other status-groups, including the high Satria, did participate fully in these *odalan*s. By praying at the village foundation temple, these Satria were in effect paying homage to their own ancestors as village founders⁹. Satria participation at this *odalan* was further evidence of that status-group's willingness to identify themselves with the *adat* village temple congregation. The Brahmana as a group were not prepared to "belong" to the *adat* village to quite the same extent, although the active participation of Brahmana individuals in the more chthonian ritual described above was undeniable.

Another important temple *odalan* that I attended, despite the indifference of my Brahmana relatives and neighbours, was that of *pura sakenan*¹⁰ located in the far south of the village territory. This temple was not one of the three "official" village temples, but still had considerable significance for the village as a whole. This was obvious from the large turnout for the first day of its *odalan* - comparable in fact to the support shown by the villagers for the death temple *odalan* already described.

Since this *odalan* was to be a "whole-village" affair, I suggested to my wife that we go along. She, and Gus Oman, the *klian adat*, who happened to be in our living room at the time, said that it was not a major event - in fact, "not worth attending". By this time I realised that this was code for "not an event that we Brahmana attend". There was, after all, no *padmasana* at *pura sakenan* either.

Not being one of the Brahmana elite, I felt free to join the *odalan* procession to this temple. For Sepenan Kaja residents like myself, the journey was considerably longer than it was to the death temple (which was sited on SK *banjar* territory). There was an impressive number of villagers from all four *banjar*. Again, as far as I could tell, representatives of all status-groups except the Brahmana were present, and showed, I thought, a very pious attitude during their brief *muspa* prayers. This was evidently a highly-revered temple.

On leaving the temple, I noticed a large and animated crowd of men packing the nearby *wantilan* pavilion, and I did not need to enquire as to what they were doing there. The usual (at major temple ceremonies) *mecaru* blood-spilling rite (read: cockfighting, with associated gambling) was in progress. I never found any evidence at any of the many cockfights I witnessed in Sepenan and other villages to support the Geertzian contention (Geertz, 1973:412-453) that Balinese cockfights were dramatic encapsulations of the status hierarchy. On the contrary, cockfighting was one of the great levellers in this respect. Plenty of Brahmana men in Sepenan were more or less addicted to the "sport". The various aspects of rearing cocks, and the actual contests, with their associated frenetic gambling, took place, as far as I could tell, without any regard to the status of players.

The fact that blood was spilled, on the bare earth, in a very raucous atmosphere, should have made it actually quite an "impure" activity, in terms of classical ideological criteria. Menstruating women, for example, were *sebel* (ritually impure), and could not enter temples or houseyard shrines, or even kitchens in the more orthodox families. Yet cockfighting attracted none of this stigma. Evidently the spiritual rationale for the *mecaru* rite - spilling blood to satiate the earthy appetites of the *buta* and *kala* spirits - justified the activity, not just in conjunction with temple *odalan* ceremonies, but also in the everyday (and illegal) cockfight meetings held in back alleys and clearings in the woods.

So, high-*kasta* men could participate in cockfighting without risking undermining the prestige of their status-groups by involvement in what looked to me, but not to informants, to be a good candidate for categorisation as a ritually polluting activity. Not all Brahmana or Satria men in the village were keen cockfighters. Some disapproved of the gambling aspect; a few, like myself, had no taste for the activity itself. But this applied equally to Sudra men. For those who did enjoy the pastime, apart from the usual use of appropriate language registers, the status of cockfight participants was irrelevant. Women, for reasons that nobody could or would tell me, were excluded from participation.

From my observations of the participation of status-group members in S *adat* village ritual contexts, status differences were virtually elided in the more animistic rites, such as those involving the *barong*. Where homage to ancestors, rather than the chthonian forces, was involved - such as during the village temple *odalan* rites - hierarchical status became more of an issue. This was particularly so for the Brahmana, ideologically the elite of the *kasta* hierarchy. As a group, the Brahmana refused to compromise their status (as they saw it) by praying to even the collective village ancestors, including the village founders, because these forebears were of lower *kasta* status than themselves.

The high Satria, however, only one notch below the Brahmana in the *kasta* hierarchy, were prepared to take part in all the village-focused ritual. Since the village was founded by their own ancestors, they had no problems with paying them homage at village temple *odalan*. In the process, they also demonstrated Satria commitment to the *adat* village, as constructed and maintained through a fundamentally status-free ideological praxis emphasising village solidarity in the face of the awesome forces of the unseen realm. On the other hand, there was widespread recognition by villagers of the iconic status of the *puri*, attested to by the consensual housing of the *barong* at the *puri*'s own shrine. This was evidence that hierarchical status, of which the *puri* was the foremost representative in the village, was of some relevance in people's minds to the practice of *adat* ritual - even of the most primordial, non-Hindu ritual.

The attitudes of the high-*kasta* Brahmana and Satria groups towards village-centred *adat* ritual demonstrated in my view some real ambivalence. As individuals, members of these groups were as enthusiastic as other villagers, if not more so, in their participation in many of the rites that I witnessed. The low-key boycott by the Brahmana, as a group, of village temple *odalan* where a *padmasana* statue was absent was a quiet but definite assertion by that status-group that their *kasta* status took precedence over village solidarity, in those (few) contexts where they perceived that a clash of the two ideologies occurred. And the public acceptance of the need for a Brahmana high priest's services at the village temple *odalan* was a clear acknowledgment of the relevance of *kasta* status in at least that particular village *adat* context.

The Satria, as a group, found no ideological impediment to full participation in village-focused ritual. However, the theoretically egalitarian view of such ritual and of the village solidarity that it reinforced was also qualified by the fact that villagers conceded that the (*kasta*) status of the *puri* made it, in difficult times, the logical choice for the sacred *barong*'s abode.

The *dinas* Village: Status in the "Modern" Arena

Although long established as a *desa adat* settlement comprising four *banjar adat* communities, the government administrative village unit, or *desa dinas* of Sepenan, was only established as recently as 1989. Previously the *adat* village had been administratively under the purview of the neighbouring *desa dinas*, a fishing village directly facing the large offshore island of Nusa Penida. Gung Ngurah, the *dinas* village head, said that population growth had been the main reason for the move to seek *dinas* status for Sepenan.

Increasing interest in national affairs and the village's place in the wider scheme of things was also apparently a motivating factor for some of the better educated villagers. A young, low-*kasta* law graduate named Made Rai, from a SK family, was the prime mover in organising the complex paperwork needed to achieve a *dinas* identity of its own for Sepenan. He would go on to have a chequered career in the village's administration, and be the subject of a heated argument at a *banjar* meeting that I attended, as described below.

Formation of a village administrative elite

When Sepenan was about to gain *dinas* village status, a so-called *formatur* committee comprising representatives of the four *banjars* was formed to canvass public opinion and propose two or three candidates for election to the position of village head (BI: *kepala desa*; BB: *perbekel*, a term for village head dating from Dutch colonial times). In the event, this committee eventually approached the Satria residence Jero Gede and actually asked that a member of that high-status household be put forward as a candidate.

Anak Agung Ngurah (Gung Ngurah), then aged just 28 and unemployed, with an unfinished law degree, was the only member of that household prepared to take the job on. He told me that, at the time, he was most reluctant to do so, but since the people, through the *formatur* committee, had sought his leadership, he could hardly refuse. *Noblesse oblige*. Moreover, the committee had told him that nobody else¹¹ was prepared to become *kepala desa*. Failure to find any suitable candidates would have jeopardised the very process of gaining independent, *dinas* village status for Sepenan. So, he agreed - not, he assured me, out of any *kasta*-related vainglory, but rather from a sense of duty to the village. In this, although he did not put it in so many words, he was appealing to the protective leadership obligation conveyed by the *kasta* ideology of Satria *dharma* - rather than the obverse of the same coin: the right to dominate the populace.

Several low-*kasta* informants indeed referred to the appropriateness of a high Satria figure in the position of village head, drawing the obvious parallels with the pre-colonial past. This apparently genuine feeling that village harmony would be best served if "modern sector" politics reflected traditional power relations has been found in other parts of Bali (Warren, 1993:122; Howe, 1995:36).

By all accounts it was certainly a major factor for many Sepenan residents. But it would be misleading to represent the matter of Gung Ngurah's election as *kepala desa* as purely a case of villagers adhering blindly to a quasi-feudal, hierarchical model of social relations. Very few villagers still depended for their livelihoods on *puri* patronage¹²; nor could the high-status residents of *puri* Jero Gede impose, or claim, any fealty from the rest of the village.

However, there was a fair degree of apparently genuine respect expressed for the status position of Gung Ngurah's family, as descendants of Balinese royalty. Informants nominated the presence of high-ranking Satria in the village as a source of satisfaction for themselves and the village as a whole. Several (Sudra) people said that it was *pantes* (proper, appropriate) that political leadership came from the *puri* - especially since a young, married male member of the family, with a modern, university education (albeit

unfinished), was prepared to do the job. Even people who claimed to be quite "modern" in orientation and opposed to pre-independence, feudal social relations, granted that such an arrangement had the advantage of neatly melding the traditional leadership pattern with the political realities of the modern state.

Hence the young Satria, Gung Ngurah, was duly elected first head of the newly-established *desa dinas* of Sepenan in 1989. And, in recognition of his devotion and skill in dealing with the bureaucracy over the attainment of *dinas* village status, Made Rai was the popular choice for the post of village secretary (*sekretaris desa*).

A neat two-storey village administrative office was built, largely with the village's own resources, on vacant land across the road from Jero Gede - meaning the new village head had only to walk across the road to work each morning. Further up the road, still in Sepenan Kaja territory, was a large *gria* (Brahmana residence) inhabited by a relatively wealthy family with important connections to the wider government bureaucracy. Ida Bagus Agung Sudira (Gus Agung), mentioned in earlier chapters, had attained the position of *sekwilda* (*sekretaris wilayah daerah*), in effect the treasurer of the government administrative district (*kabupaten*) of Gianyar, in which Sepenan village was located.

As I noted earlier, this was a very influential position to hold. All government development funding for the district was channelled through Gus Agung's office, and the arrangement of tenders for all public works undertaken in Gianyar was also handled there. Rigorous accounting and strict accountability of funds were not exactly enforced throughout the government bureaucracy (the pejorative acronym KKN - *korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme* - was yet to be invented then, although the practices referred to were of course thoroughly entrenched). Suffice to say that the position of *sekwilda* was well-known as a *basah* ("wet", i.e. lucrative) one for the incumbent.

His wife once remarked sardonically to me and my wife, over coffee on their spacious verandah, that the "going rate" to obtain the position of *bupati* (regent or district head) was Rp 300 million (over A\$ 200,000 at the time). Not daring to ask what the rate was for his position of *sekwilda*, I was left to surmise that Gus Agung had been obliged to come up with that sort of money with respect to his own appointment.

At any rate, his position certainly allowed Gus Agung to have great influence over the approval of funds for public infrastructure in villages within the district under his control - such as Sepenan itself. It meant too that the new *dinas* village head had a direct line of communication to effectively the most powerful official in Gianyar district. As *sekwilda*, Gus Agung was actually second in command to the *bupati*. But in practice he handled all the district finances, he told me, and left the ceremonial side of politics, which

he seemed to disdain, to the *bupati*. I got the impression that Gus Agung regarded the *bupati* as financially untutored, if not actually illiterate, and that Gus Agung had virtually complete control of official district finances.

Gus Agung was therefore a key member of the Sepenan LKMD (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa* - Village Community Security Council), a body established by law in all Indonesian villages to formalise residents' participation in development projects (Warren, 1993:242). I found it difficult to get information about the operations of this *dinas* village board, although its acronym featured prominently on the large notice board outside the village head's office (along with that of the LMD - *Lembaga Musyawarah Desa*, Village Consultative Council - also established by national law).

I was never told about meetings of these *dinas*-oriented village councils, and certainly never invited to sit in on them - unlike the monthly *banjar adat* meetings in SK, which I was welcome to attend. (Indeed, in the "era of reform" ushered in with President Soeharto's downfall in May 1998, these village government institutions were, at time of writing, to be abolished¹³, regarded as unrepresentative of villagers' aspirations).

The village head, Gung Ngurah, told me that he headed the LKMD, as *ex officio* general chairman. The rest of the council comprised the village secretary, the four *banjar dinas* heads (*klians dinas*), and a handful of other prominent villagers, most of whom held no official position in the *dinas* village administration. The village head's wife, Gung Biang De, was (also *ex officio*) an LKMD chairperson, in charge of PKK (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, Family Welfare Development) affairs, such as disseminating information and guidance on family planning, nutrition, child immunisation, and similar issues.

Important decisions were made at LKMD meetings on the uses to which government funding was to be put. An instance of this was the asphaltting of the dirt road (*gang*) that ran past Gria Suci (where I lived), Gria Angkatan (where Gus Oman, the *klian dinas* of SK, lived), Gria Bucu (Gus Indra's family), Gria Delod Dangin (family of Gus Tu Arnawa, known as "Gus Telkom", after his place of employment), and the home and coffee stall *warung* of Dewa Sumpang (SK *banjar dinas* informal secretary/assistant to Gus Oman) and his wife Desak Latri. The lane also ran behind Gus Agung's residence.

The main road through the village was asphalted, but all the side roads were merely dirt tracks of varying widths. These were dustbowls in dry weather and muddy bogs in the wet season, so there was a great demand for road sealing funding. When finally some such funding was made available to the village, an LKMD meeting decided that the road just mentioned would be the one to be sealed. This was duly done, with some *gotong*

royong voluntary labour provided by the local *tempek* (physical neighbourhood subdivision of the *banjar*) to prepare the surface before the asphaltting contractors moved in.

There was some resentment of this allocation of government funding. Other *tempek* of Sepenan Kaja, and indeed other *banjars* of the village, of course felt that the roads were in a worse state in their neighbourhoods. Open dissent was rigorously avoided in most contexts (*banjar* meetings were, to a certain extent, an exception), so I had to rely on feedback from my wife and a couple of regular visitors to our *gria* for information on villagers' reactions to the road resurfacing. Also, Jero Rasman (from our *gria*) was well attuned to village gossip, and usually ready to pass it on to us.

It was common knowledge, according to Dayu Tu Suwati, that there was an informal alliance of SK *banjar* members, from the northwest and northeast *tempeks* specifically, gathered around Gus Agung and Gus Oman. As Brahmana and also office-holders in the modern political system, these men each combined in their persons both the prestige of high traditional (*kasta*) status and a share in modern-day political power. This was particularly so in the case of Gus Agung, the *sekwilda* of Gianyar. I mentioned in an earlier chapter how I once had to make an appointment to interview him, but was kept waiting while a procession of supplicants and lobbyists came and went; I finally gave up and went home without my interview on that occasion.

My brother-in-law, Gus De, who spent a lot of time in the village, told me more of this informal, SK-based faction. It had grown around an informal partnership between the two influential Brahmana men. Most of the villagers who were, in Gus De's term, *anak buah* (followers, unofficial retainers) of Gus Agung's clique were Sudra men from the immediate neighbourhood. Other Brahmana in the neighbourhood had loose connections with this clique. I noticed one or two working on the large and expensive additions to Gus Agung's house that were built when I was living in the *banjar*. But most of the willing labourers were Sudra men who often helped out in such private projects of Gus Agung's, or worked on public works projects funded through the LKMD and the village head. In view of the road-sealing and house extension projects just mentioned, it seemed that the Gus Agung-Gus Oman axis had great influence in decisions taken by the village administration about how such funding should be allocated.

Gus Agung was clearly regarded by those who had much interaction with him as a very enigmatic personality. By virtue of his key position in the Gianyar District administration, he was, without question, the most powerful individual in the village, although of course he held no post within the Sepenan *dinas* village administration itself. He had also been a traditional spiritualist healer (*balian*) of considerable reputation, although by 1993 he had virtually retired from that calling. I had the impression that he

was not popular in the village generally, although his importance to the village was certainly conceded. I rarely noticed him at any of the many *adat* village activities, such as those described above and in the following chapter. He was, however, active in the national political sphere as played out at the regional level, as a strong promoter of the "government party", Golkar. The "modern" political arena in Sepenan, and the key roles played by villagers who were also members of the traditional elite, will be briefly described next.

Elite roles in Sepenan "floating mass" politics

The term "floating mass" referred to a fundamental principle of the New Order (Soeharto) regime, in 1993-94 still in power. This principle stipulated that overt political activity at the grass roots level (basically, in villages) was banned. At the same time, the mass political organisation Golkar (Golongan Karya, the "Functional Groups" established by Soekarno), which always coyly refused to call itself a political "party"¹⁴, exercised a near-complete monopoly on the political loyalties of all civil servants.

In New Order official discourse, distinctions between the Indonesian state, the executive, and the civil service were deliberately and constantly blurred. Korpri, the official all-Indonesia civil servants' association, was an arm of Golkar. All civil servants were expected to vote for Golkar at general elections. Ambitious civil servants had no hope of advancing up the administrative hierarchy unless their loyalty to Golkar was unquestioned.

The most important demonstration of such loyalty for higher-level officials in regional administration (the sub-district, district, and of course provincial governor levels) was to *mengsukseskan* general elections. This linguistically awkward expression basically meant two things: to ensure a relatively trouble-free election "campaign" period and polling day, and to ensure that Golkar received a substantial, preferably overwhelming, majority of votes in the district under a particular official's control.

At the village level, overt political campaigning was forbidden. Ostensibly, this was to prevent the boiling over of partisan passions at election time. In fact, the measure was designed to hinder the growth of opposition politics, already hobbled by the official recognition of only two "opposition" parties, the Islam-oriented PPP (National Development Party) and the PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party, then led by Megawati Soekarnoputri, daughter of the first Indonesian president). There was considerable popular support for the PDI in Bali in 1993-94; during that period I attended a large and boisterous PDI rally at the Gianyar town square, where Megawati got a tremendous reception from the crowd.

In Sepenan, the *dinas* village administration was almost exclusively pro-Golkar. This was entirely the norm virtually anywhere in the archipelago, after the 32-year New Order stranglehold on the civil bureaucracy. Informants were reluctant to speak of such "political matters" - in fact, the semblance of "floating mass" villager apathy concerning national politics was carefully maintained, as far as I could see, at all times. Yet the Gus Agung - Gung Ngurah - Gus Oman (Gianyar district secretary - Sepenan village head - Sepenan Kaja *banjar dinas* head) axis, according to the few informants who would talk about such matters, constituted an effective extension of Golkar influence into village affairs.

At the 1992 general election, informants said, yellow Golkar T-shirts were distributed free of charge. Poorer villagers tended to accept this brand-new clothing as a welcome addition to their meagre wardrobes - many reportedly caring little about the political message they were displaying each time they wore the T-shirts. It was made clear to villagers that a Golkar victory at the election, with a high level of Sepenan village voter support, would result in a favourable attitude at district level towards request for development funding from the village. Gus Oman, as *klian dinas*, was the key motivator for *banjar SK*; the *klian dinas* of the other three *banjar* reportedly also fell into line with what must have seemed to them to be an overwhelming current.

Golkar had its predictable election victory, and Sepenan duly received funding for a few projects, mainly of a cosmetic nature. Houseyards were equipped with electric lights over their main entrance gates, and concrete was liberally deposited to reinforce gutters and to "beautify" key points on the main road. These improvements were made with an eye to boosting S's chances of winning the inter-village *lomba desa*, where villages competed for the title of the most progressive village in the district. Sepenan in fact went on to win this title from all the villages in Gianyar district - a source of great pride for everyone I spoke to on a more recent trip back to the fieldsite.

Political friction at a "hot" *banjar* meeting

Not everyone in the village administration was an active or even passive Golkar supporter. One notable exception was the village secretary Made Rai, mentioned above as the architect of Sepenan's rise to *desa dinas* status. This young man was an enthusiastic PDI supporter - a fact which was fundamentally incompatible with his position in the *dinas* village leadership. After the 1992 election, his distaste for the workings of the Golkar-bureaucracy complex had become increasingly apparent to his colleagues, and in January 1994 he was sacked by order of the Gianyar district head (the *bupati* - Gus

Agung's immediate superior). The reason given was simply that he was judged "not compatible" (*tidak cocok*) with the village head, Gung Ngurah.

I attended the next monthly SK *banjar* meeting after Made Rai's dismissal. He was present, but said nothing throughout the meeting. However, one of his relatives, known as I Bawa, did raise the matter. Made Rai had been the only representative of SK on the executive of the village *dinas* administration, and his dismissal was raised at the meeting in that context. His family (and some other supporters) objected, ostensibly, to the loss of this direct *banjar* representation. Of course, they were also objecting to the perfunctory dismissal of an energetic and talented village official, purely on (national) political grounds - he was a PDI supporter in a Golkar-dominated environment.

Gus Oman, the *banjar's klian dinas*, certainly also represented Sepenan Kaja interests with the village administration. But, from comments made at the *banjar* meeting, and from some further background supplied by my neighbour and reliable informant Dayu Tu Suwati, who also attended, it was clear that some residents felt that Gus Oman was too close to his fellow Brahmana, Gus Agung, to his fellow high-*kasta* village head, Gung Ngurah, and by extension to the whole monolithic Golkar-bureaucracy-armed forces government regime. This local alliance was perceived by some as materially benefiting the members of the alliance and their families and followers more than it benefited the village as a whole. The extravagant extensions to Gus Agung's home were a case in point.

Gus Oman was naturally at the *banjar* meeting; in fact, he sat beside Sadra, who as *klian adat* chaired the meeting. When the matter of Made Rai's dismissal was raised, Gus Oman found himself in a difficult position. He came under politely-worded attack for a perceived failure to defend his fellow SK resident, Made Rai, in the latter's position as *dinas* village secretary. The Golkar-national politics factor was not even mentioned - as indeed, under the "floating mass" principle of enforced village-level (overt) political apathy, it could not have been. *Banjar* solidarity was the surface issue, but the real substance of the debate that ensued was political.

I Bawa, a man in his forties, became increasingly agitated as Gus Oman attempted to explain the dismissal as the administrative hierarchy's solution to a simple personality clash. I am sure that most people present knew the basic facts of the case. From their expressions and frequent asides, many were annoyed by the "high-handed" action of the Gianyar *bupati* and the role in Made Rai's dismissal that the village head must have played. There was a clear implication that Gus Oman had acquiesced in the sacking.

Gus Oman, for his part, was the essence of cool, *alus* politeness, in stark contrast to the rising anger of Made Rai's champion. The latter rose to his feet several times to emphasise a point, before being pulled down by his companions to a more appropriate and respectful position sitting on the *banjar* hall floor, at the same level as everyone else. At the point of exploding with rage, he stormed off down the road into the darkness.

However, he soon reappeared and continued his running argument with Gus Oman, complete with threatening gestures. Gus Oman could not publicly criticise the actions of his *dinas* superiors, or, for that matter, do anything about the dismissal. In an attempt to defuse the situation, he offered his resignation as *klian dinas* to the assembled *banjar* members - a dramatic gesture in that context, I thought, but in fact not so unusual in Balinese village politics generally (Warren, 1993:124).

Gus Oman's gesture seemed to mollify I Bawa somewhat, and the meeting cooled down from that point. Made Rai's supporters were certainly not convinced that anything but a great injustice had been perpetrated with his sacking, but they seemed to finally accept that there was little they could do about it. Gus Oman's proffered resignation as *klian dinas* was not accepted by the meeting.

Throughout this disquieting episode, the man actually chairing the *banjar* meeting - *klian adat* Sadra - took virtually no part. Occasionally he reminded the Made Rai contingent of the norms of (almost theatrically exaggerated) politeness to which they should have been adhering in that context, their anger about this particular issue notwithstanding. Otherwise, this debate (the highlight of the meeting) was clearly a protest by *banjar* members who were outsiders with respect to a small elite of political insiders, represented at that meeting by Gus Oman.

The issue was primarily a *dinas* village one, and was only raised at the *banjar* meeting, I believe, to put public pressure on Gus Oman. Some *banjar* members clearly felt that Gus Oman, with the special access to the *dinas* village administration that the position of *klian dinas* afforded, ought to focus more on lobbying for the welfare of the whole *banjar*. Acquiescing (as some saw it) in village secretary Made Rai's sacking was at best a failure on Gus Oman's part to fight for the retention of SK's only full-time representative at the village head's office. Gus Oman's position as *klian dinas* was only a part-time one - albeit an influential one, through his *ex officio* membership on the LKMD board and his privileged access to the village head.

Some regular visitors to our houseyard (including at least one Brahmana neighbour) also referred rather cynically to the large, two-storey building currently being erected at Gus Agung's *gria*, evidently to provide luxurious accommodation for his teenage

children. I visited the site, not far from our own *gria*, several times during construction. Gus Oman and his younger brother were usually there, working on the building, directing the labourers and carpenters - many of whom I recognised, by face if not by name, as Gus Agung's followers. Gus Oman proudly told me that the new building was to cost Rp 100 million, a sizeable sum in those pre-economic crisis days. He was, he said, the construction foreman. He responded only with a knowing smile to my tongue in cheek comment that a District Secretary's salary, such as Gus Agung would be receiving, must be a very good one.

The implication was that government funding in some form was paying for this private building, and that the Gus Agung - Gus Oman alliance was the principal beneficiary. The cost of Gus Agung's new house was well in excess of any single public development project that the village had seen since its inception in 1989. In stark contrast to this, the reader may remember, the village had been forced to meet most of the cost of building the village head's office from the villagers' own contributions - despite the official, government nature of the building.

Local traditional elite as political insiders

But was there any substantial relationship between these political realities and the fact that these two men were of the Brahmana *kasta* (and that the village head was a high Satria)? That is, was there any connection between membership of the traditional elite and the occupation of positions of power in the "modern" national political system?

Certainly, there was a real symmetry between the *kasta* ideology of Satria domination of the political sphere and the occupation of the *dinas* village head position by a member of the local Satria "ruling house". This symmetry was evident to, and accepted by, a fair proportion of the village voting population, as witness the circumstances of the initial village head election in 1989, already described. Gung Ngurah was effectively the only candidate for the *kepala desa* post, reportedly by public demand (albeit with some dissenters, such as Made Rai's family and supporters).

The Brahmana of SK (where most of the village's Brahmana lived), however, lacked such a strong ideological claim to positions of leadership in the *dinas* village - other than the general aura or approbation afforded them as members of the most prestigious status-group of the Triwangsa/*kasta* hierarchy. Gus Oman seems to have been elected *klian dinas* largely because of his personal qualities and good past performance as *klian adat* (a post he had served in some years before I came to the village). He was a confident,

forthright man, yet a master of refined, *alus* communication, skilled at patient deliberation and the avoidance of confrontation if at all possible.

He was also courageous, as proved by an incident that occurred a year or so before my arrival. A psychotic individual armed with a knife - not a local person - entered Gus Agung's house intending to harm him (the motive was never explained). Gus Oman, as *klian dinas*, took responsibility for handling the dangerous situation. He and his younger brother, Gus Tut, negotiated with the man, to no avail, and finally overpowered him, without serious injury to any of them. This event naturally enhanced Gus Oman's reputation; although a Brahmana, he had demonstrated real "Satria" qualities of leadership¹⁵, decisiveness and daring. In short, he was well qualified for the *banjar*-level leadership that the *klian dinas* position entailed. And the potential benefits for the *banjar* of his close relationship with Gus Agung - a fellow Brahmana, fellow member of the *patus* Brahmana, and fellow SK resident - would have been appreciated by many among the *banjar* membership.

Gus Agung, for his part, was a career civil servant. He had successfully climbed the ladder of the administrative hierarchy through a combination of factors. As a young man he studied economics at a prestigious university in Java. He was able to do so because his father was a wealthy man, having been a powerful local official in the last years of the Dutch colonial administration¹⁶. The special position accorded to the Brahmana "litterati" by the Dutch had been a feature of the colonial administration (Vickers, 1989:147). Gus Agung had excelled in financial management as practised in the post-colonial Indonesian state bureaucracy. He was also a good Golkar man. Accordingly, he progressed to the important post of Gianyar district secretary, as previously mentioned. And, being a resident of Sepenan and of higher rank than the *dinas* village authorities, he was of course highly influential in *dinas* village matters.

Gus Agung's high traditional status as a Brahmana may seem to have had little connection with his successful career in the "modern" bureaucracy. There is however an important historical element behind the extraordinary success of the traditional *kasta* elite in taking over the reins of post-colonial political power in Bali - subject to the overriding domination of the Jakarta government, of course. The Brahmana *kasta* asserted an ideological claim to expertise in all things pertaining to literature in the broadest sense - basically, to anything written, including laws. Hence the high position afforded the Brahmana as judges and arbiters of customary law under the Dutch (Vickers, 1989:147-148) While many Satria men, the traditional secular leaders, were appointed local overlords (*punggawa*) by the Dutch, Brahmana men were also given important local positions in the colonial administration. Gus Agung's father was a case in point.

Gus Agung was born into the bureaucratic life. He had been exposed to the wider world of the state bureaucratic hierarchy from birth. His studies in Java and subsequent civil service career outside the village meant that he was very much attuned to the wider Indonesian bureaucratic structure. And this orientation, for Gus Agung and for many other Triwangsa, can be traced back to the colonial reinforcement of the political domination of the traditional elite.

Gus Agung therefore limited his overt involvement in the affairs of his own village, other than his largely behind-the-scenes influence through the LKMD and his *banjar*-level ally Gus Oman. The latter, living and working (as a goldsmith) in the *banjar*, had a much greater day-to-day engagement with village affairs, both *dinas* and *adat* in nature. Along with the village head, Gung Ngurah, these three men of SK *banjar* dominated the political scene of the village. The other three *klian dinas* (one a Dewa, the other two Sudra men) representing the other *banjars* of the village, also sat on the LKMD board. But Gus Agung's high position in the district administration meant that the SK-based alignment of himself with Gung Ngurah and Gus Oman constituted a potent triumvirate of political "insiders".

Traditional status was not a technical prerequisite to the achievement of their positions in the *dinas* village. In practice, however, the survival in the village community of elements of *kasta* ideology meant that a majority of villagers (most of whom were low-*kasta* people) were prepared to elect a descendant of the traditional ruling elite to head the Sepenan government administration.

Having put Gung Ngurah in that position, however, villagers were far from deferential and uncritical in their appraisal of his performance. On the contrary, as previously mentioned, I often heard people refer euphemistically to his "passive" management style and his lack of inspiring leadership in village affairs. In pre-colonial days, expressing such open criticism of Satria overlords would have been courting drastic punishment. In S in the 1990's, however, an overt community expectation of performance in "modern sector" leadership accompanied the *kasta*-oriented attitudes favouring Satria as leaders.

Villagers were not yet prepared to vote Gung Ngurah out of office, and in fact re-elected him as village head in 1997, despite their evident disappointment with his performance. Nevertheless, his perceived weak performance in the Satria *dharma* field of secular leadership could only tend to erode the pragmatically, if not ideologically, fundamental basis of Satria *kasta* status itself in the eyes of villagers. Goldman (1970:5) found a similar situation with Polynesian chieftainship, as I mentioned in Chapter One. The election of a popular low-*kasta* village head at the following election would not

surprise me - particularly if the candidate had demonstrated "Satria" leadership qualities. Such a scenario would of course indicate a further erosion of Satria status, as villagers realised more clearly that one did not have to be a member of the Satria status-group to act in a "Satria" manner - and to lead the community.

Satria *kasta* status could in fact have been enhanced and adapted to accommodate the "modern" state formation if Gung Ngurah had performed strongly in the *dinas* leadership role of village head. By electing him to this position, the village community certainly, in effect, gave the *puri* the chance to make this adaptation and consolidate their Satria status in the "modern" political environment. This opportunity seems largely to have been lost for the high Satria of S, represented in this vital *dinas* context by Gung Ngurah.

Furthermore, the end of the New Order/Soeharto era and, presumably, the political dominance of Golkar will permit a much more pluralistic political life. The alignment of the *puri* and the village head in particular with Golkar will no longer buttress Gung Ngurah's leadership position. The sacked (low-*kasta*) village secretary, Made Rai, with his long-standing Megawati-led PDI affiliation, may well emerge to challenge Gung Ngurah for the village head position.

Such a development would have significant ramifications for the *kasta* status of the Satria residents of the village. Their group status would be severely undermined. The ideological basis of that status - the scripturally-ordained sacred *dharma* of the secular overlords - would of course remain for as long as and to the extent that people still accepted the relevance of the Hindu Vedas. But the expectation by villagers that this *dharma* be confirmed and justified in practice by appropriate performance in the leadership role, if not met, would be a serious blow to Satria status. To an extent, this had already happened in Sepenan, and the indications were that the trend would continue.

Traditional insiders but political outsiders

Membership of the Triwangsa/*kasta* traditional elite has then contributed to the occupation of positions of power in the "modern" Indonesian political system by members of the Balinese elite status-groups. The disproportionately high representation of high-*kasta* people in the Balinese provincial government administration was mentioned in an earlier Chapter. This situation was clearly also reflected in the Sepenan village administration, as it also was at the higher, Gianyar district level (where the *bupati* was a high Satria, title: Cokorda, and the *sekwilda* - Gus Agung - a Brahmana). And at the peak

of the provincial bureaucracy, the governor (Ida Bagus Oka) was a Brahmana, as was his predecessor (Ida Bagus Mantra).

However, a homogeneous depiction of the traditional elite status-groups as comprising a solid power elite in Bali would misrepresent the situation and attitudes of many "high-born" Balinese who have little or no interest in, or opportunity to obtain, a share of political power.

Of the 13 Brahmana *gria* (residences) in *banjar* SK and the two in *banjar* Cabaang, only two - the residences of Gus Agung and Gus Oman - had important links with the Indonesian state bureaucracy. Certainly the high Satria residence, Jero Gede, did furnish the *dinas* village head. And of the many lesser Satria (title: Dewa/Desak) families in the village as a whole, one held the position of *klian dinas* (for *banjar* S. Tengah). Most of the high-*kasta* families of the village, however, were more concerned with making a living, ensuring their children got a good education - in short, they had the same concerns as their low-*kasta* neighbours.

The lives of the Brahmana of SK, whose comings and goings I saw on a daily basis, provided a good illustration of the exclusion of most of them from the pursuit of power in the village setting. Some were ordinary civil servants, such as Gus Tu "Telkom". Some were poor farmers, such as Gus Indra - a devoted participant in *adat* ceremonies, but, as he often remarked, quite uninterested in the intrusion of "the government" into daily life. Most Brahmana families were relatively comfortable, but two or three were very poor. Gus Buruan, who often visited our *gria*, had to send two of his four children away to live with relatives, because he could not support them on his meagre wages as an art shop employee. The existence of the *patus* Brahmana did not guarantee general financial support for chronically indigent Brahmana families, although the *patus* would supply some funding and voluntary labour for the life-cycle rituals of such families.

Indeed, even within the one houseyard compound, noticeable disparities of wealth sometimes existed between core families living there. At *Gria Angkatan*, across the lane from our own *gria*, Gus Oman (the *klian dinas*) and his nuclear family were clearly materially better off than the nuclear families of either of his two brothers. I often visited there, and noted the very basic state of the brothers' accommodations. Gus Oman's quarters were of a considerably higher standard. Dayu Tu Suwati concurred with my surmise that this was doubtless related to his close involvement with Gus Agung and his input into village financial management, as alluded to above.

The (Dewa/Desak) Satria and the (Gusti) Wesia families (the balance of the Triwangsa representation in the village) were similarly uninvolved in direct *dinas* village

politics. Of course, issues arose from time to time that were intimately related to village politics, particularly the disbursement of development funding and perceptions of irregularities in this disbursement. Villagers who for most of the year might have been basically politically apathetic could at such times become keenly interested in making their opinions known, through their *klian dinas* representative, or indeed on the floor of monthly *banjar* meetings. But this applied as much to low-*kasta* villagers, the "outsiders" (*jaba*) of the *kasta* hierarchy, as it did to members of the traditional elite.

Indeed, the great majority of Triwangsa people in Sepenan were as much political outsiders, in terms of having any real influence on the course of *dinas* village politics, as the Sudra/non-*kasta* majority. The persistence of ideological attitudes favourable to Triwangsa political leadership meant that the local high Satria house maintained nominal political control of the *dinas* village through Gung Ngurah's election as village head. Gus Agung's privileged background as the son of a high-*kasta* colonial era functionary, coupled with his academic ability and personal propensity to succeed in the state bureaucracy, ensured that he would wield great influence in his home village. Gus Oman - the *klian dinas* of SK, a fellow Brahmana and *banjar* neighbour of Gus Agung - found that an ongoing alliance with Gus Agung was mutually beneficial and, through their official (LKMD) and unofficial connections with the village head, also beneficial to *banjar* SK. These three high-*kasta* men, all from *banjar* SK, were the controlling force in S village politics.

Nevertheless, the fact remained that most of the traditional elite families in Sepenan were on a par with their "commoner"/Sudra neighbours when it came to *dinas* village politics. It was no accident that these particular high-*kasta* men had come to control the key positions of power in the *dinas* village administration. But, outside of the crucial informal alliance between Gus Agung and Gus Oman, I saw little evidence of a tendency to involve other members of the status elite in the practical exercise of power and in sharing the benefits thereof.

The closest thing I saw to any attempt at comprehensive status-group solidarity was the *patus* Brahmana described above. But the basis for this association was the idea of mutual aid for group members in *adat* ritual matters. As far as I could ascertain, the association made no attempt to lobby for members' interests in the *dinas* political arena¹⁷ - and probably would have caused an uproar among other villagers if it had. Otherwise, most of the Triwangsa traditional elite were as much political outsiders in Sepenan as were the Sudra majority.

Status-group Membership and Village Identity

The above observations seem to support a conclusion that membership of a status-group (Triwangsa/*kasta* group or non-*kasta* title-group) in Sepenan had little effect on the highly positive evaluation by such villagers of their membership of the village community. The evidence for this was the regular and obviously whole-hearted participation by the various ranks of the traditional elite and members of the Sudra title-groups in the whole panoply of *adat* village ritual. The sole exception to this that I found was the insistence by the Brahmana families, concentrated in *banjar* SK, on not attending the *odalan* temple anniversaries of the foundation and village assembly twin temples (*pura puseh/pura desa*).

This insistence by the Brahmana was certainly, in effect, an assertion of their claim to *kasta* status-group ideological supremacy. But informants were uncomfortable with this interpretation, when put to them in those terms. My wife and father-in-law defended this Brahmana stance in a classic Balinese way: "The gods and our ancestors would not approve; we have no choice in the matter". It occurred to me that the low-key manner in which the Brahmana of Sepenan "boycotted" those particular temple ceremonies, without making an issue of it by any open discussion on the matter, reflected the inherent tension between the ideal - and, indeed, the pragmatic necessity - of village solidarity and the inherently divisive ideology of hierarchical status that *kasta* ideology represented.

Yet, of course, the Brahmana could only maintain this assertion of exclusiveness as long as the rest of the village tacitly accepted the Brahmana practice. Any sort of organised protest by villagers would have thrown the whole issue into stark relief, potentially forcing the Brahmana as a group to choose between solidarity with the *adat* village and the maintenance of *kasta*-based factionalism.

The Satria groups, including the prestigious Anak Agung families, were largely spared such an ideological dilemma, their public devotions at the village foundation temple well justified by the fact that their own ancestors (of the Dewa Manggis line) were the village's founders. Some of the Brahmana with whom I discussed this issue put more emphasis on their Brahmana *soroh* descent groups, which of course transcended their links with Sepenan, the immediate village of residence. Some other Brahmana could be described as being more "village-oriented", or less concerned with stressing the genealogies of their family branches. None of them, however, breached the unwritten rule of avoiding public prayer at village temples not equipped with a *padmasana*. This, and their claim to peak status in the *kasta* hierarchy, meant that they would always be in a more ambivalent position with regard to village solidarity than any other identified group. And

in S, Brahmana was also the only status-group in the village that had a high-profile *kasta*-based association, the *patus* Brahmana.

This clearly elitist association, however, took care not to antagonise the rest of the village by, for example, seeking to pull its members out of mainstream, *banjar*-based village life. Also, importantly, the *patus* was not supported by all the Sepenan Brahmana. Some, including my father-in-law, felt that the association ran a great risk of being seen as a separatist group, with the potential to split the village along *kasta* lines.

However, apart from their insistence on a passive "boycott" of the annual village temple ceremonies where they would have had to publicly pray to lower-status ancestors, Brahmana of virtually all economic circumstances and degrees of inclusion in village political affairs were in my observation generally diligent *adat* village members. Some were more diligent than others, but that of course applied to everyone.

All the other *kasta* status-groups, including the prestigious Anak Agung families, took part in *adat* village ritual along with the Sudra majority. In one or two minor details, members of these status-groups did quietly assert their "difference" - for example, high-*kasta* women were unlikely to walk in the long processions carrying the large, ornate *banten* offerings on their heads.

Basically, however, holders of traditional status did not see this factor as detracting from their membership of the village community. This membership was an important aspect of villagers' identity, as demonstrated in their commitment to both village-focused ritual and *dinas* village contexts. Even Brahmana elitism, expressed in that status-group's non-participation in certain village-level temple rituals, and in the formation of the *patus* Brahmana association, was balanced by the enthusiastic participation of Brahmana people in the great majority of *adat* village affairs. Far from holding themselves aloof from village-oriented spiritual devotions (and secular activities like the gamelan competition), status-groups in the village - with the only partial exception of the Brahmana - took an active role in such activities.

It was not that the hierarchical ideology of *kasta* was compatible with the egalitarian ideology of the village community - these world-views were diametrically opposed. Yet, to a large extent, villagers managed to contextualise both ideologies. In whole-village ritual contexts, *kasta* status arose as an issue only when the Brahmana were confronted with the perceived dilemma entailed in making obeisance at public temples to ancestors not only of their own but of lower-status villagers as well. They were not prepared to compromise on this point; that aside, Brahmana were prominent participants in village-unifying *adat* ritual.

As to *dinas* village matters, his membership of the prestigious traditional status-group associated with leadership (the Satria) was certainly the major factor in the initial choice by villagers of Gung Ngurah as *dinas* village head. As he was commonly believed to have turned out to be rather "passive" in the role, his subsequent re-election probably owed more to a general inclination towards saving the "face" of his family than to his performance as village head. Both the election and the felt need to save the face of this Satria man were of course indications of the persistence of *kasta* ideology among villagers.

A more generalised (rather than a strict *dharma*-ordained) *kasta* status was also a factor in the rise to political prominence of Gus Agung and Gus Oman in village affairs. On the other hand, Sudra "commoners" occupied the position of *klian dinas* in two of the other three *banjar* (Sepen Kelod and Cabaang, which had very few Triwangsa residents), and other Sudra villagers sat on the LKMD board. Village political affairs were strongly influenced by men of *kasta* status, but low-*kasta* villagers had significant input also (e.g., until his sacking, the *sekretaris desa*, Made Rai).

The election of a Satria "traditional leader" to the village head position certainly pointed to a successful bridging of traditional and modern era political domination by that *kasta* status-group. In Sepenan, however, perceived non-performance (including lack of the expected *wibawa*/charisma) by the village head could militate against the future likelihood of continued popular support for Gung Ngurah as *kepala desa*. This is not to say that another, more charismatic Satria candidate would not appear and, gaining majority village support, maintain the Satria grip on local political power. In the case of the Brahmana, prominence by certain individuals of that status-group seemed to be on the rise. This was perhaps due largely to the drive of those individuals to capitalise on the advantage of their ascribed status, but the political networking between the key players in village politics - Gus Agung *sekwilda*, Gung Ngurah, and Gus Oman - must be seen as an example of solidarity among the *kasta* elite in the political arena.

The political arena aside, I was struck by the feeling of village solidarity evident at all of the *adat* and secular village events I attended. These included the more "indigenous", still-enchanted *adat* rites (such as those involving Ratu Gede, the village *harong*), the more mainstream Hindu-Bali ceremonies (such as the various village temple *odalan* anniversaries), and "modern" village activities (such as the district gamelan competition and the "model village" *lomba desa* competition). In these contexts, participation by members of high-*kasta* status-groups and "commoner" title-groups (such as the Pasek Pulosari and Pande families) was - with the sole Brahmana exception noted above - as complete as that of the Sudra majority. The idea-value of village solidarity was not one subscribed to only by the Sudra "peasantry", as Geertz and Geertz (1975:6-7) had

argued, but was enthusiastically embraced by virtually all the high-*kasta* villagers in Sepenan, as well. The various Sudra title-groups, with their own ideological basis for a potentially divisive factionalism, were no exception in their adherence to this village solidarity. The “unity and cohesion of the village” identified by Ottino (1994:485) as the “fundamental value” of the Bali Aga residents of Trunyan was clearly also an important value for Sepenan residents.

But within that encompassing ideology of community, egalitarian sentiment was most evident in the most chthonian *adat* rituals; *kasta* status and Sudra title-group prestige were virtually effaced in those contexts. Assertion of *kasta* status began to appear vis-a-vis the village community in the Hindu-Bali ritual (such as village temple *odalan*), where the *pedanda* high priest’s officiation was accepted as necessary. Also, the agreement by villagers that the Satria *puri* was not only the safest place to store the *barong* but also the most spiritually potent place outside of the public temples themselves indicated the continuing strength of the hierarchical *kasta* ideology.

The following chapter will explore the relevance of the membership of villagers in status-groups and Sudra title-groups to their perceptions of their identity as members of the corporate neighbourhood community to which they belonged - the *banjar*.

Notes

¹ Devotion to ancestors is a primary feature of Balinese spirituality, and this devotion is evoked by and directed to (more correctly, properly expressed at) specific places (*kawitan*) associated with notable forbears. There are also generalised *kawitan* serving as the locus of devotion for particular named groups or clans, as mentioned previously, and for unnamed but more or less corporate descent groups, the *dadia* described in Geertz and Geertz (1975). Hence a given villager, through family, *dadia*, and status-group membership, might well owe spiritual support to several shrines honouring ancestors - starting most proximately with his or her (if unmarried) or her husband's (if married) own houseyard shrine (*sangga/merajan*), then to the wider family's acknowledged *kawitan* (usually in another village, possibly far away), and also to a larger shrine or shrines specific to his/her status-group sub-clan (say, Pande Tusan) and (in this example) to the whole Pande clan (with a "peak" shrine or *pedarman* at the pan-Bali mother temple of Besakih (Stuart-Fox, 1987).

² Shortly after arriving in the village I attended a mass meeting of villagers called by the district administration to discuss the proposed "modernised" version of the village's *awig-awig* custom legislation. The new version was relatively short (25 typed pages) and succinctly outlined general principles governing village administration, land ownership and use, the five classes of religious ritual (concerning the gods, the clergy, the deceased, human life cycle rites, and the appeasement of malicious spirits), marriage, and dispute resolution. The streamlined *awig-awig* regulations were signed by the *bendesa adat* and the *klian adat* of the four *banjar*; that is, by the elected *adat* leaders of the village. Government (*dinas*) involvement, however, was signalled by the fact that the document was witnessed by the *dinas* village head, the Gianyar *camat* (sub-district head) and a delegate of the Gianyar *bupati* (district head). There was a definite religious tone to the document, which included Hinduism as a basic tenet, and opened with the prayer "Om Swastiasu, Om Awignamastu Nama Sidham".

³ The numerous little shrines erected and venerated at banyan (*waringin*) trees and other natural features are testimony to this animist component of the Bali-Hindu cosmology.

⁴ This is admittedly a vague formula, but it is part of my attempt to come to grips with the extraordinary spiritual potency with which this "friendly visit" was obviously imbued.

⁵ Such possession can happen to anyone present, of any social status. It is also a routine occurrence for certain spirit mediums (*balian taksu*), and for temple priests (*mangku*) on certain occasions, where divine guidance on village matters is sought.

⁶ A sort of salad of minced raw or steamed duck, chicken or pig meat with coconut and spices. All the ingredients are chopped up together on a wooden log segment, using two heavy kitchen knives called *blakas*. The knives are wielded in a rapid double action resembling the two-handed "hacking" used by masseurs. Bones within the meat are left in and chopped along with the rest, often leaving sharp splinters in the finished dish. This never bothered my informants. The preparation of *lawar*, usually early in the morning, was a feature of many *adat* rituals, particularly life-cycle rites. Only men performed this task (called *mebat*), and after observing this activity many times I can say that social status, in any manifestation other than the use of the appropriate language registers, was irrelevant to this activity.

⁷ Men seemed to have exclusive control of such "indigenous" *adat* rites; women's roles were on such occasions limited to preparation and transport of *banten* offerings, and other general support roles. Only men could carry the funeral tower to the cemetery for cremations. And monthly *banjar adat* meetings were exclusively a male domain - although women could attend, if representing a

houseyard lacking a qualified male adult. And yet, women could be temple *pemangku* priests and even *pedanda* high priests, could distribute *tirta* holy water to people praying at a temple or shrine, and could conduct some life cycle ritual aspects.

⁸ Informants said that, in fact, a few Brahmana individuals sometimes attended these *odalans*, but never actually prayed publicly in the twin temples on such occasions.

⁹ The Anak Agung families then resident in S were part of the Dewa Manggis line; their ancestors settled Sepenan in the early nineteenth century (Geertz and Geertz, 1975:123, Fig. 13 refers; see also the Babad Manggis Gianjar, compiled by Mahaudiana, 1968:107 and appendix p. 3).

¹⁰ This was a "branch" of the highly-revered temple of the same name on Serangan Island, one of a handful of temples of Bali-wide significance (the so-called *sad kahyangan*; see for example Grader's article in Swellengrebel, 1984:164).

¹¹ An informant said that a few other villagers were interested in the position, including Made Rai, but the committee convinced these potential candidates that the majority view in the village was that someone from the high Satria should be chosen.

¹² Half a dozen tenant farmers worked the small residual rice field acreage owned by the *puri*, and about the same number of domestic staff were employed there. I was told that the *puri* had once owned a much larger holding of rice land, but most of it had been lost in the earlier decades of this century through gambling.

¹³ *Media Indonesia On Line* internet newspaper report, 24 March 1999 edition.

¹⁴ In the "reform era" following Soeharto's resignation in May 1998, Golkar finally did acknowledge its party political status and officially register as the Golkar Party (in March 1999), thereby fulfilling new legislative requirements for participation in the 1999 general election.

¹⁵ Rubinstein (1991:61) criticises the stereotyping of Brahmana as purely ritual specialists, pointing out that the Brahmana's own *babad* histories relate cases of members of that *kasta* conducting themselves very much in the style of the Satria warrior ideal. Such behaviour, as exemplified by Gus Oman in the present example, might not enhance Brahmana status as the priestly *kasta*, but it would certainly enhance the standing of the Triwangsa overall as a group of elite leaders in society.

¹⁶ McCauley (1984:167ff) also mentions this background in her article on this same individual (whom she calls simply "Gus Aji", a generic Brahmana informal title) and one other man, in their capacities as *balian* traditional healers.

¹⁷ Although Gus Agung, SK resident and Gianyar District Secretary, was both an influential member of the village LKMD board and a keen supporter of the *patus* Brahmana. However, I found no evidence of (material) benefit accruing to *patus* members, or for that matter to Brahmana villagers generally, from any informal lobbying that Gus Agung might have made in *dinas* administration contexts.

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Chapter Six. *Banjar* : Factional Subtexts in a Corporate Community

In this chapter I focus on ritual and secular activities of members of the *banjar* community of Sepenan Kaja (SK). I examine the extent to which residents embraced an egalitarian *banjar* ideology, and how this ideology was asserted and reinforced in practice. At the same time I demonstrate how *banjar* solidarity was at times challenged, with varying degrees of organisation, by some resident members of hierarchical *kasta* status-groups. These same high-*kasta* individuals also joined in *banjar*-oriented activities in which their status was virtually negated, in the interests of the same community solidarity that hierarchical status denied. Ideological conflict is thus seen to lie within and between individual community members more than between discrete factions of varying status positions.

The *banjar* Ethos - Egalitarianism or Pragmatic Communalism?

Rationale of the *banjar* community

The concept of the *banjar* as the fundamental "hamlet" residential and ritual community within Balinese villages and urban areas will be familiar to the reader by now. To recap briefly, all villages and towns comprise one or (usually) more *banjar* subdivisions, often bearing names indicating their geographical location (Upstream/North Sepenan, East of the Palace, etc) or, in some cases, reflecting a current or historical preponderance of members of a certain title-group (Banjar Pande, Banjar Brahmana). The latter type of *banjar* is far less common than the usual pattern of *banjar* comprising families of various status rankings, with of course (because they are some 90% of the Balinese population) a majority of "commoner" (*jaba* or Sudra) residents - as in *banjar* SK.

The *banjar*, more specifically the relatively corporate residential and ritual community known as the *banjar adat*, is evidently an ancient Balinese social arrangement. Although there are important differences with the lowland, Hindu-Javanised villages, even the remnant "Bali Aga" settlements which demonstrate pre-Javanised social

and ritual practices retain *banjar* subdivisions of the village units (Korn 1984:321; Barth, 1993:44).

The adoption of more or less elaborate cremation ceremonies, in emulation of the early Hindu-Java nobility in Bali, implied a need for significant inputs of materials and labour. Swellengrebel (1984:32) took the view that the proper handling of such funerary arrangements, and the organisation of "the mutual assistance needed for the purpose", was the primary stimulus for the increasing emergence of the *banjar*, as compared with the *desa* (village), as the community with which villagers most closely identified.

These speculations are plausible, although the *banjar* could well have been an important social grouping long before the Hindu method of disposal of the dead by cremation became the norm in (most of) Bali - as witness the existence of *banjar* communities within the "Bali Aga" villages just mentioned. In any case, why could funerals not be handled by the village as a whole, rather than the *banjar* of which the deceased was a member? My wife's view was that the organisation of funerals, although requiring considerable work and expense, could generally be handled quite adequately by *banjar*-sized communities (typically 100-200 families). She also thought that it was appropriate that those who knew the deceased best - his neighbours and fellow *banjar* members - should be the ones to help his spirit make the transition into the realm of deified ancestors.

My fieldwork experiences in Sepenan and several other places in Bali convinced me that organising the rather onerous ritual requirements of the funerals (*ngaben*, or *pelebon* for high-*kasta* people) of residents was certainly a major ritual rationale for the *banjar*'s existence. The funeral of my wife's uncle, who was living at Gria Suci when we took up residence there for my fieldwork, provided an unwanted but compelling illustration of this. This event is described in detail below.

However, based on my observations of the daily life of members of *banjar* SK, the idea (indeed, the ideology) of the *banjar* was much wider than that of a simple funeral association. I have previously referred to my impression that *banjar* SK was the community that residents most strongly identified with and "belonged to". The *banjar* membership, the *krama banjar*, was the group of people whose members knew one another not just by sight (as with, for example, villagers from the other three *banjar* of Sepenan) but by name and reputation as well. That is, the *banjar* was the classic community of people living in a small, well-defined area and interacting on a regular, often daily, basis. The juridical and reciprocal aspects of the Balinese institution of the *banjar* were succinctly summarised by C. Geertz (1959:994-995).

As Geertz and Geertz put it, "For the Balinese commoner, the hamlet [*banjar*] is the most important single set of people in his life, outside of family and kingroup" (1975:16). From my observations in *banjar* SK, some of which are recorded below, I would add that the *banjar* was equally significant for many high-*kasta* residents, as was identification with the village (*desa*) itself.

As also shown in the previous Chapter, the village of Sepenan was something of an "imagined community" for residents, by comparison with the daily, face to face reality of the *banjar* community. In fact, there was even some rivalry between the *banjar* of Sepenan village, despite the solidarity, illustrated in the previous Chapter, that membership of *desa adat* Sepenan and devotion to its village temple set implied. This rivalry was not overt, most of the time. It was played out on the volleyball court and - according to Dayu Tu Suwati, who attended these sessions - behind closed doors at the LMD and LKMD village council meetings. It was manifested in fierce competition to build the best *ogoh-ogoh* monster figures to be paraded on the evening before the annual Nyepi holy day.

Gus De, my brother-in-law, told me that there were even occasional brawls between gangs of hot-headed youths from different *banjar*, although I never heard of such behaviour while I was living in the village. The closest thing to inter-*banjar* fighting that I saw was some exaggerated pushing and shoving between young men from SK and ST in a raucous crowd watching a *joged* dance¹ that I was filming in the S. Tengah *banjar* pavilion.

Factionalism was of course prevalent within the *banjar* as well. Status-based factionalism will be the main thread running through the ethnographic material to follow. Even aside from status issues, small, dense settlements of people the world over seem particularly prone to splits, schisms, (malicious) gossip, feuds, and the like (e.g. Firth, 1951:53). From what I saw and heard, or was told, *banjar* SK had its share of this². Yet I was still very impressed by the high degree of cohesion that *banjar* members demonstrated, in both ritual and secular life. The *banjar* ideology was explained to me as basically one of mutual assistance in time of need, and cooperation in the maintenance of the communal infrastructure and the discharge of the ritual obligations of the *banjar* community.

That was the essence of the responses of many informants to the basic question "What does *banjar* mean?" Mutual assistance in time of need was the key component, and the prime example of a "time of need" was invariably given as a death in the family. Warren's informants (1993:16) in another part of Gianyar had a similar concept (see also Boon, 1977:59-60; Covarrubias, 1972 (1937):60ff; Eiseman, 1990:72ff). The need for communal labour and cash contributions to ensure the upkeep of *banjar* property -

particularly the *bale banjar* meeting hall, the *pura banjar* shrine, and associated outbuildings housing the *banjar*'s gamelan set, dance costumes, etc - was also cited by my informants as an obvious and important justification for a *banjar* ideology of mutual obligation as well as mutual aid. There was also the more prosaic reality of the need to maintain the roads and tracks, and other such infrastructure, on *banjar* territory; government assistance for such work was rare.

The egalitarian aspect of *banjar* solidarity

The fact that a community agrees to promote a strong spirit of cooperation and mutual aid does not in itself imply any egalitarian ethos. This is so even if such a cooperative spirit is elevated to the level of ideology and reinforced with strict rules of mandatory membership for family heads resident on *banjar* territory, as was the case in SK.

However, egalitarianism was implied in the official "rules of association" of the village, which according to Sadra, the *klian adat* of the *banjar*, were accepted as applying also to *banjar* SK. The *banjar* had no separate "rules" of its own. The village's (25-page) written guidelines, known as the *awig-awig desa adat Sepenan*, outlined the basic principles of village membership and governance, land use and inheritance, responsibilities for the five classes of ritual observances, and marriage and divorce issues. The (*adat*) village was to be led by the *bendesa adat*, assisted in the four constituent *banjar* by the *klian adat*. No mention at all was made in the *awig-awig* of the social status of villagers, let alone any link between such status and the holding of village office or any other connection.

These guidelines clearly did not differentiate between villagers in laying down their joint responsibilities to contribute equally to the good governance and ritual safeguarding of the village. Members of *banjar* SK, many of whom were frequent visitors to our *gria*, agreed that indeed status ranking was irrelevant to *banjar* decision-making and to any of the variety of *banjar*-oriented secular and religious activities that members undertook.

I have previously mentioned that the monthly formal *banjar* meetings (*sangkepan banjar*) strictly enforced a status-effacing equality of opportunity to address the meeting on any subject. Out of respect for the *banjar* concept, the use of refined language was expected, within the limits of the *alus* language capabilities of members. Indeed, a disgruntled *banjar* member - a former *klian adat* who had been disgraced because he had misappropriated *banjar* funds - was fined and required to make propitiatory offerings because he referred to fellow *banjar* members at a meeting as *jelma*, a coarse Balinese

word for "person". Such usage was perceived as a deliberate attempt to demean his fellow members. The religious aspect of the subsequent sanction imposed demonstrated that egalitarian spirit - at least in the *banjar* meeting context - had the force of sacred ideology for *banjar* members.

The use of *alus* language by everyone at the meetings negated, in that specific, *banjar*-focused context, the status-marking aspect of the differential language register used in everyday discourse to acknowledge status differences. This practice was clearly employed to reinforce an egalitarian ethos with respect to the *banjar*. I did notice, however, that high-*kasta* members were still addressed by their titles. Gus Oman, a Brahmana, for example, was always addressed at *banjar* meetings as he was at any other time, as "Gus Aji". For his part, to observe the spirit of *banjar* egalitarianism, he and other high-*kasta* members addressed low-*kasta* members as "Bapak" (using the polite, Bahasa Indonesia term) instead of the usual "Bli" ("older brother", but routinely used by high-status people to low-*kasta* interlocutors, as well as between status equals). Indeed, Indonesian was often used at the *banjar* meetings I attended - doubtless because the virtual absence of language registers in that language facilitated debate and discussion in an egalitarian mode.

In the *banjar* meetings that I attended, members of all status rankings certainly spoke freely and assertively on a range of issues. Low-*kasta* members engaged in spirited debate with high-status members, and as far as I could tell, pulled no punches. The meeting in which the Made Rai case was debated, mentioned in the previous Chapter, was a case in point.

The weekly *gotong royong* or *kerja bakti* "working bees" were also a deliberate expression of a *banjar* ethos that specifically ignored the traditional status ranking of members. Every Sunday morning, one man from each houseyard (in theory) would gather at the *bale banjar* pavilion, and the group would then put in a couple of hours' work at whatever had been previously decided would be the project for that day (clearing undergrowth away from roadsides, clearing blocked drainage ditches, etc). Small fines were levied on houseyards which failed to provide at least one man for this purpose. I noted that some members were much more diligent in this matter than others - but there were always people of all status rankings in the working parties. There was usually much levity and good-natured banter in these groups, regardless of their status, which I therefore believe functioned to maintain a status-effacing *banjar* solidarity as much as the physical infrastructure.

Discussion

Warren (1993:87) characterised the Balinese cultural value opposed to the ideology of hierarchy (a value that I am calling in this context the *banjar* ethos) as "a populist-egalitarian model rooted in local corporate structures and reciprocal relations". That the SK *banjar* community had instituted systematic reciprocal relations (in ritual affairs and community asset maintenance, but not in economic areas) is confirmed below.

Whether such pragmatic reciprocity - even if raised by the community to the status of ideology - may be termed egalitarian, is a crucial question. It is crucial to any analysis of Balinese social relations - such as this thesis - that posits an ideological challenge to the co-existing but hierarchical ideology of *kasta*. The statements of informants in SK, and the status-ignoring or effacing characteristics of the village/*banjar* *awig-awig* rules, *banjar* meeting rules, and community *gotong royong* workgroups were all evidence of a spirit of community solidarity that had no place for hierarchical status. The religious overtones to this *banjar* ethos, mentioned above and further, below, justify the label of ideology. The absence from the *banjar* ethos of any concessions to the social fact of *kasta* status justifies the use of the "egalitarian" label.

A fuller consideration of the theoretical implications of *banjar* egalitarianism and its ideological opposite, hierarchical status (the ideological protagonists of Geertz and Geertz's "War without End") will be found in the concluding Chapter. The remainder of this Chapter will use fieldwork illustrations to examine the tension between the two sets of values, as expressed in the behaviour of *banjar* members in a variety of contexts where the *banjar* community as community had either a mandatory or optional involvement.

Status-based Factionalism and the Praxis of Communal Solidarity

The importance of *banjar* support for members' ritual events

By "praxis" in the section heading I refer to group activities undertaken by *banjar* members acting consciously in accordance with the *banjar* ethos of mutual aid in time of need. Comments made to me on several such occasions, as described below, convinced me that *banjar* members accepted both the pragmatic usefulness and the ideological/sacred character of this ethos.

This attitude was shared by high-*kasta* members of the *banjar*. Indeed, many Brahmana and Satria members were keen supporters of the *banjar* as the principal organising structure of the community - not least Aji, my father-in-law. People of all status rankings freely acknowledged their dependence on "the *banjar*" for help when their families had to perform an important *karya* - a ritual event such as a wedding, tooth-filing, or, most importantly, a funeral. Contributions in kind from the *banjar* were an important aspect of the assistance provided on such occasions. The various *banten* offerings required on these occasions called for considerable inputs of certain plant and animal materials. Also, the houseyard holding the *karya* was obliged to provide at least coffee, cigarettes and biscuits for all those helping out. On some occasions (notably the climactic stage of weddings), a full meal for each guest was also required.

Apart from the expense of all this, which was beyond the means of many *banjar* families, the labour inputs on such occasions could be very high. At my wife's uncle's funeral, for example, the kitchen in our house was staffed around the clock for ten days by women from the *banjar*. Apart from three hot meals per day for the many family members and *banjar* members who chose to stay there virtually full-time for the duration of the event, service of coffee and cigarettes was non-stop. Also on that occasion, rather complicated structures of bamboo, for shelter and ritual significance, occupied some two dozen men for two or three days. All this labour would make the proper conduct of these ceremonies impossible, without the active participation of the *banjar*.

A more subtle but equally cogent motivation for all *banjar* members to contribute their time and effort in these ways was the universally held idea that one's family's *karya*, to be successful, had to be *ramai* (crowded, bustling with people taking part)³. This was a frequently-expressed view. Comments after the many *karya* I attended always included a reference to the "big crowd", and to individuals noted to have travelled a good distance to take part, as evidence that the event was a success.

The obvious corollary to this was that a poorly-attended *karya* would be mortifying for the family concerned. But with several hundred members, the *banjar* could always be relied upon to furnish at least an adequate-sized "crowd" for these events. And the possibility of the withdrawal of such support certainly served as a powerful disincentive for *banjar* members inclined to persist in behaviour deemed offensive to the *banjar* generally.

These concerns were shared by high-*kasta* houseyards in the village, including the Brahmana *gria* and the high Satria residences Jero Gede and Jero Tengah. I attended several weddings, funerals, tooth-filings, Balinese birthdays (*oton*) of individuals, blessings of new or refurbished houseyard shrines and other buildings, and other ritual

events. These events, always involving the *banjar* to a lesser or greater extent, were a realisation of *banjar* solidarity, of community support for member families.

Nowhere was this brought home to me more forcefully than at the rite of washing the body of the deceased before a burial or cremation. This was usually done in the open courtyard of the family's houseyard, watched by not only the family members but also by dozens, if not hundreds, of *banjar* members. This community participation, I was assured, not only helped to spread the emotional burden of the loss of the deceased, but also, importantly, helped to ensure a suitable "send-off" for the soul of the departed.

A good turnout of *banjar* members was also a consoling reassurance for the deceased's relatives that they were valued members of a community with significant resources - one that would always help out on such occasions. All that was required was a reciprocal willingness to do their fair share of work in another member's time of need. And since death came to *banjar* members of all social status rankings, high-status families had as much need for a crowded, *ramai* participation of fellow *banjar* members as did any other residents.

In pre-colonial days, high-status houses - notably the high Satria *puri* - could call upon the services of many low-kasta retainers (*parekan*) to guarantee that the domestic ritual of the elite was of a suitably grand scale. This was a central aspect of Geertz's (1980) *Theatre State*. In the *banjar* of SK in 1993-94, such traditionally-enjoined commoner support of high-kasta ceremonies had largely disappeared. As a consequence of that fact and of the continued belief among the traditional elite, as well as commoners, in the need for large turnouts at major family rituals, the high-kasta families actually depended on *banjar* support more than ever. This support could be expected as of right, but only by *banjar* residents who subscribed to the ethos of *banjar* solidarity, with its strong emphasis on reciprocal rights and obligations within a basically egalitarian community.

For this reason, it was in the interests of high-status families to show themselves to be good *banjar* members, by their active participation in secular *banjar* activities and, most importantly, the major ritual *karya* of *banjar* members. The Triwangsa overall numbered only some ten percent of the population (with much the same proportion in *banjar* SK). Even if there could be unanimity among this traditional elite - an unlikely prospect, given the diversity of opinion on the matter - it would be difficult for the high-kasta families living in the *banjar* to successfully mount an appropriately crowded and bustling ritual event.

Nevertheless, despite the apparently crucial role of the wider *banjar* population, certain high-*kasta* members persisted in asserting a degree of independence from the *banjar*. The *patus* Brahmana's very public role in the funeral of my wife's uncle, described in the following section, was the most blatant example of a challenge to *banjar* solidarity by status-based separatism that I witnessed during my year in the village.

The *patus* Brahmana role at Gus Aji Cakra's funeral

As previously mentioned, my wife's uncle, the older brother of her father and the only male member of the family resident full-time at Gria Suci when we arrived there in early 1993, died in August of that year. This unfortunate event provided me with the opportunity to observe at the closest possible quarters the many aspects of a Balinese funeral. In this case it was the funeral of a high-*kasta* man, essentially poor, resident in the *banjar* all his life (except for earlier military service).

The same day that news of his death (in hospital in the capital) reached the village, the *banjar* swung into action. Gus Oman, the *klian dinas*, and Sadra, the *klian adat*, both came to the *gria*, accompanied by a dozen other *banjar* residents, and began the complex preparations laid down by the Pitra Yadnya (funeral rites) contained in the village's *awig-awig* guidelines, and by local custom.

The next auspicious day (*dewasa*) for the cremation was determined by consultation of the Balinese calendar to be seven days away. Typical of Balinese humour on such occasions, someone joked that the deceased was clever, timing his departure so close to the next *dewasa* day. The *pedanda* high priest used by the family - a relative still living in the family's *kawitan* (ancestral shrine) village of Peringalot - was notified that her services would be needed on that day.

Gus Cakra's remains were brought home by ambulance and he was ensconced in the open pavilion (*bale dangin*) at the east side of the *gria*. His body was temporarily preserved by injection of formalin via a vein opened near the ankle. This was done in full view of whoever happened to be in the courtyard at the time (which included his young daughters). Again, jokes were made about the "doctor" - a local man who specialised in this necessary task. No concessions were made to the traditional status of the deceased during this procedure.

Meanwhile, the number of *banjar* members busily engaged in various chores in the *gria* grew. After work hours, dozens of men hacked and sawed bamboo into a variety of

decorative and symbolic motifs, and erected a substantial raised, covered platform for use by the *pedanda*. Women began assembling the many *banten* offerings prescribed for the occasion. Cooking of food to be consumed by the *banjar* volunteers began in earnest, mostly in the kitchen of our quarters, where it continued for some ten days overall. The *gria* was full of people, day and night, in an orderly chaos of activity. It was certainly a *ramai* affair. Although preparation of the ritual requirements (offerings and temporary infrastructure) was the major rationale, preparation and the rather festive consuming of meals to sustain the many *banjar* members involved was clearly another important aspect.

Warren (1993:149-150) refers to the significance of the joint partaking of meals at such *banjar*-focused occasions by *banjar* members of all status rankings. I shared many such meals and can confirm the absence of status discrimination in both the preparation and consumption of the meals (sex discrimination was another matter). The virtual abandonment of *kasta* norms of commensality in these *banjar* community contexts was a powerful indicator of the egalitarian nature of the *banjar* ideology of community solidarity. (Such status-effacing communal meals are however not a universal feature of *banjar* ritual; see for example Parker, 1989:64).

Most of those involved seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves much of the time. Joking and teasing was the rule, evidently, and I noted that high-*kasta* people were fully included in this. Gung Aji Raka, patriarch of *puri* Jero Gede, was the butt of a quite risqué comment (by a low-*kasta banjar* member) concerning the covering power of his sarong at one point, and took it in good humour. In fact there was a general atmosphere of good-natured solidarity throughout the protracted funeral process, with high-*kasta banjar* members participating alongside their commoner neighbours in all the various tasks that I observed.

The body of the deceased was publicly washed on the second day after returning home. His near-naked body was ritually washed with *tirta* holy water as he lay on a simple platform in the *gria*'s courtyard, watched by a throng of family members and *banjar* residents. This was a key funeral rite, and the *banjar* was required to attend - as it was at certain other stages of the funeral process (attendance at the deceased's houseyard when the death is announced, construction of the bamboo platform and half-cylinder cover on which the deceased rests, washing of the body, and accompanying the cortege to the cremation ground).

The washing itself was done by Gus Oman, a Brahmana, as a man of this *kasta* was traditionally asked to perform this service. Informants said that it was appropriate that someone from the "purest" *kasta*, moreover the *kasta* associated with the production of holy water, should wash the body. This was the first manifestation of an element of

acknowledged *kasta* superiority that I noticed in the funeral proceedings (apart from the use of the *alus* language term *pelebon* instead of the standard *ngaben* to describe the funeral rites for the Brahmana deceased).

As the days passed, a special decorated wooden tower (*bade*) on a platform of lashed bamboo poles was being constructed at the *banjar* meeting pavilion. This was to be used to transport the coffin from the deceased's home to the cemetery, where it would be burned after the deceased's body had been cremated on a separate pyre. The shape of the *bade* resembled the *padmasana* statue before which the Brahmana prayed at the *odalan* of the death temple, described in the previous Chapter. The large bull figures and multiple *meru* roofs of the high Satria funeral towers emphasised secular prestige (albeit, in *kasta* ideology, a divinely-ascribed prestige). The far less elaborate Brahmana versions, however, symbolised the more direct divine connection that was the basis of Brahmana status. Construction of the *bade* for Gus Aji Cakra, as for any deceased *banjar* member, was part of the *banjar*'s responsibility. I did notice that most of the men working on it were Brahmana, but some Sudra people were also involved.

On the day appointed for the cremation, the *pedanda* high priest arrived in her minibus, with two or three escorts and some special *banten* offerings prepared back at her *gria* in Peringalot. The priest ascended the bamboo platform already prepared for her by *banjar* labour, and recited the relevant mantras and blessings, her *pedanda*'s silver bell tinkling in her left hand. The crowd below chatted and joked as usual, all but oblivious to the priest's ministrations. The important thing, I was told, was that a *pedanda* was there to "close" (*muput*) the week-long rites.

While this was going on, the *patus* Brahmana made their appearance outside the *gria*. A group of about 30 men had gathered in the vacant lot opposite the *gria* entrance. Most wore the uniform black T-shirts bearing the *patus* name (*semeton* Brahmana Sepenan or Brahmana family of Sepenan) and symbol. The symbol was the sacred Hindu *ongkara*, symbol of the *trimurti* or tripartite Godhead (Brahma, Siwa, Wisnu). On the backs of the Brahmana men, in that context, it was also a rather obvious reminder to fellow *banjar* members that the wearers were also members of another and more exclusive group - one that claimed a unique status at the pinnacle of the *kasta* hierarchy.

I was invited to join the group; a few non-Brahmana men were also included in what turned out to be a brief session of concerted drinking of a strong mixture of *arak* spirit and Coca-Cola. Gus Agung, the Gianyar *sekwilda*, boasted that he had drunk five glasses. He wore the *patus* uniform, as did his ally in village politics Gus Oman. My three full brothers-in-law were all there, but only Gus De wore the *patus* T-shirt. Aji, my father-in-law, stayed inside the *gria*; the reader will remember that he was opposed to the whole

patus idea. Gus De said that he wore the uniform to go along with the others (at the time, he was the only male member of the family living at Gria Suci). In fact, many other Brahmana men from the *banjar* chose not to wear the *patus* uniform during their participation in the funeral.

The drinking session lasted only about a half-hour, after which it was time for the body to make its final journey from the *gria* to the cemetery for cremation. The *patus* members took over at this stage, loading the body in its white coffin into position high up on the *bade* tower. When this was secured, the *patus* members lifted the *bade* and carried it down to the main road, accompanied by the usual mobile gamelan. At the crossroads, the tower was given the customary frenetic heaving and spinning around, before being carried off at a trot, accompanied by much whooping and hollering, down to the cemetery next to the death temple.

The *patus* played a major role in organising the details of the cremation, including tending the powerful propane burner used to ensure complete cremation of the remains. Other *banjar* members, including Sadra, the *klian adat*, were also involved. There was no obvious friction between *patus* members, prominent in their uniform black T-shirts with the *patus* logo, and other *banjar* members, during these proceedings. Sadra looked vaguely unhappy, but that was his normal mien in any case. When asked later for his thoughts about the *patus* Brahmana's active role "in uniform" on the day of the cremation, his reply was diplomatic and non-committal. It was just a case of some *banjar* members who happened to be from the same "extended family" (*semeton*), who had something in common, expressing solidarity with the family of the deceased. If the potential divisiveness of such non-*banjar* solidarity had occurred to Sadra, he chose not to acknowledge it to me.

Aji, my father-in-law, was unequivocal in his opposition to the *patus* Brahmana activism. Some other Brahmana - notably Gus Indra - privately agreed. For them, the mandatory aspects of *banjar* participation in the funerals of members should be conducted in a way that reinforced and re-validated community solidarity. The assertion by a particular sub-group - especially one based on the elitist *kasta* hierarchy - of a separate identity threatened the guaranteed reciprocity enshrined in *banjar* ideology.

Sudra members also felt this embryonic threat to the communal solidarity of the *banjar*. I heard of no overt adverse reaction by *banjar* members to the *patus* Brahmana role in Gus Aji Cakra's funeral. But the term *patus jaba* (Sudra/commoner mutual aid association), which I had heard once or twice previously, began to crop up more often in conversations with various neighbours. The context was always that of some life cycle ritual, of a kind at which *banjar* participation was not mandatory⁴, conducted by a Sudra

banjar member. Again, Sadra claimed that there was nothing sinister in this informal arrangement, which was "no different in principle from the rationale for the *patus* Brahmana". That is, when a member needed help with staging a family ritual *karya* for which *banjar* assistance was not obligatory, *patus* members would attend and ensure that there were always enough people to make the *karya* a success.

In theory, friends, relatives and neighbours from the *banjar* would do this in any case. The fact that at least some members felt the need to make pacts as "insurance" in this context indicated some cracks in *banjar* solidarity. And the *kasta* basis of the two *patus* in question pointed to underlying tensions between the *kasta* elite and the Sudra majority in the *banjar* community.

In fact, the *patus jaba*, although never formalised to the same extent as the *patus* Brahmana, pre-dated the formation of the latter (in approximately 1990). As mentioned in an earlier Chapter, the *patus* Brahmana was formed after an incident at a ritual *karya* at the houseyard of Sadra, the *klian adat*. On that occasion, some Brahmana men present objected to a low-*kasta* person giving Gus Indra, a Brahmana neighbour and friend of Sadra's, an instruction to carry a pot of food. Gus Indra himself was a man of great humility for whom the niceties of *kasta* discrimination were seemingly irrelevant. On that occasion he was reportedly not at all offended, but some of his Brahmana *kasta* equals were. The more conservative of these men went on to establish the *patus* Brahmana, and subsequently played the highly visible role at the funeral just described.

This role clearly challenged the supremacy of the *banjar* in handling the vital function of the proper disposal of the dead and the requisite purification of the *banjar* community. In particular, the seemingly impromptu drinking session of the *patus* Brahmana members, in uniform - not within the *gria* but outside, in a nearby field - was noted by several informants as a significant departure from the usual behaviour on such occasions. Although not expressed to me in such terms, I saw the drinking session as a reassertion of *kasta* commensality norms and also a bold assertion of solidarity by a *kasta*-based status-group in the quintessentially *banjar*-oriented context - the funeral of a *banjar* member. The exclusive nature of the drinking session was in sharp contrast with the "all in together" approach taken to the consuming of the meals jointly prepared by *banjar* members of all status rankings inside the *gria*.

My interpretation of the *patus* Brahmana challenge to *banjar* solidarity in this context is however complicated by the fact that many of the Brahmana men who were drinking in the field had also, earlier that day, helped to prepare and joined in consuming the communal meals described. By drinking together outside the *gria* as a group, *patus* members may well have been asserting separatism from the *banjar*-dominated activities

within the *gria*. But by also partaking in both preparation and consumption of the communal meals that were a status-effacing feature of the *banjar* role in the funeral rites, the majority of *patus* Brahmana members were simultaneously acknowledging the supremacy of the egalitarian *banjar* ideology in the important context of the funeral of a *banjar* member.

To really assert a *kasta*-based distinction, the *patus* Brahmana members could have declined to share the communal meals. Given the apparently central aspect of these meals in reinforcing an egalitarian *banjar* solidarity, such a refusal by a *kasta*-based sub-group of the *banjar* would have serious consequences for the very viability of the *banjar* community as currently conceived. Such a development had not occurred when I left the fieldsite, and more recent reports indicate that the *patus* Brahmana has not had much visibility over the past several years. This probably indicates that *banjar* solidarity in SK has survived the challenge posed to the *banjar* by this particular expression of *kasta* exclusivity.

Voluntary community participation in *kasta* elite ritual

Apart from the funerals of members, attendance by the *banjar* community at the various "private" ritual events of member families was voluntary. Where such attendance was desired - generally, at the more important rituals, such as those described below - families could either "invite the *banjar*" beforehand at a monthly *banjar* meeting, or else invite *banjar* members personally. If the *banjar* was invited as a whole, the meeting would discuss this and agree to accept or decline the invitation. To my knowledge, no such invitation was declined by *banjar* SK during the year that I lived there. The option was always there, however, and I was told that rejection by the *banjar* of such an invitation would be regarded as a chastisement and a severe embarrassment for the family involved.

To the extent that the elite status-groups in SK regarded themselves as part of the *banjar* community and wanted *banjar* involvement in their major ritual events, these groups needed to maintain good relations with the rest of the *banjar*. The primary indicator of the state of these relations was the degree of enthusiasm shown by commoner *banjar* members for voluntary participation in the rituals of members of the *kasta* elite.

(The situation was of course more complicated than is implied here. For example, I have already indicated that individual members of the *kasta* elite varied greatly in how much importance they accorded to their own status - our neighbour Gus Indra's near-indifference to his high Brahmana status was a case in point. Many of the "lesser Satria"

(Dewa/Desak) of the *banjar* were also certainly not preoccupied with status issues, apart from the language register aspect, which everybody seemed to respect. A very important factor too was the general reputation of an individual or family, high-status or not, in determining the extent of *banjar* support⁵ forthcoming in these voluntary contexts. These factors militated against the possibility of a comprehensive Triwangsa solidarity capable of rivalling the overall community solidarity of the *banjar*).

Dewi's wedding

I was fortunate to participate during fieldwork in the various aspects of the wedding of my sister-in-law Dr. Ida Ayu Dewi Indrayani and Ida Bagus Putra of Gria Gede Kemenuh, also in Gianyar district. Two of the formal stages of this wedding, which took place over 15 days in October 1993, were set in our *gria*, with the final two stages at the Kemenuh *gria* where Dewi, following standard virilocal norms, has since resided.

This was an archetypal status-reinforcing union between members of the same (Brahmana) *kasta*, moreover of the same *soroh* (Brahmana Kemenuh clan). My wife's/Dewi's family in general were not overly exercised by *kasta* endogamy norms⁶, but the very prestigious Brahmana *gria* at Kemenuh was firm on this point. The Australian wife of the groom's brother, long married in to that *gria*, said that it was the resident *pedanda* and *pedanda istri* who insisted on adherence to Brahmana endogamy for all the young family members - and had so far prevailed in this matter. (That she herself had managed to overcome this insistence on clan endogamy was probably due to the same sort of perception of Western foreigners - as completely "outside the system" - that operated when I married my wife, who is from the same Brahmana clan).

Like the rest of her immediate family, Dewi lived in Denpasar before her wedding. However, most of the major life cycle rites of her wedding had to be conducted at Gria Suci. This was the family's "old house", where the family shrine was located. It was at this shrine that she would formally "take her leave" (*mepamit*) of her own ancestors before leaving to join her new husband's family at his residence.

There was no requirement for *banjar* participation in any aspect of the weddings of members' children (Aji, Dewi's father, remained a *banjar* member, despite living in Denpasar). However, like many Balinese - high-*kasta* or otherwise - Aji was anxious that the main stages of the wedding were suitably *ramai*, with good crowds in attendance. The

considerable expense of the wedding was not a problem; Aji himself was not poor, and the groom's extended family was clearly prosperous.

Money, however, could not buy the willing participation of the *banjar* community. That, in the event, this was forthcoming was an indication of the family's good standing in the *banjar*. This, in turn, reflected the accumulated goodwill earned by Aji over the preceding decades through generous contributions to the upkeep of *banjar* assets⁷, as well as his family's diligence in regularly returning to the *gria* for a day or two to support *banjar* and village *odalan* ceremonies and the family ritual of various *banjar* members. Many visitors to the *gria* referred to Aji's generosity, and also approved of his maintenance of the *gria*, despite no longer living there, which they saw as a sign of his desire to retain his *banjar* links.

Aji's reluctance to support the *patus* Brahmana was also approved of by *banjar* members - although Sudra members were difficult to draw out on the subject. Dayu Tu Suwati said that there was indeed some resentment of the *kasta*-based separatism that the *patus* Brahmana represented for *banjar* solidarity. Aji's quiet stand against the *patus* tendency was, in her view, widely appreciated.

Nonetheless, Dayu Tu assured me that some voluntary *banjar* support would always be provided in any case for such (non-funeral) events at members' houseyards. The extent of the assistance provided would be a reasonable indicator of the reputation of the family in question. Of course, members with large extended families resident nearby (such as the Pasek Pulosari *dadia* located in the west quarter of the *banjar*) could and did make full use of their family network to ensure that their own ritual events were well-attended. But the ideology of *banjar* solidarity required the participation of *banjar* members who were there as members of the corporate community, in a spirit of mutual assistance. If the major ritual events of members came to be handled purely by members' extended families, or by members of their own status-groups, the *banjar* ideology itself would be threatened. Factionalism, whether based on kin-groups or status-groups, was an ever-present potential threat to *banjar* solidarity.

Aji was keenly aware of this, and wanted to involve the *banjar* in his daughter's wedding. Wishing to avoid the expense⁸ and the grandiose implications of formally inviting the *banjar* as a whole, Aji sent invitations instead to several dozen *banjar* members. A sizeable turnout of these members, adding to the large contingent of extended family members, ensured a satisfyingly crowded *gria* at both of the formal stages of the wedding with a significant ceremonial component⁹ held at the bride's "home". These were the "proposal" (*memadik*), when the groom's family and retinue came to Gria Suci to ask for the bride's hand in marriage, and the "taking"

(*pengambilan*), when the Kemenuh contingent again visited and Dewi ritually asked her ancestors' permission to leave the family before departing for her new home at Gria Gede Kemenuh.

The participation of *banjar* members (of all status rankings) ensured that the required temporary infrastructure was in place. The usual bamboo constructions, including a quite intricate woven temporary roof covering the whole courtyard of the *gria*, were in place. Food was prepared in quantity, starting early in the morning, by a dozen men from the neighbourhood. These included several Brahmana, Gung Rangki from Jero Gede, Dewa Sumpang from across the road, Sadra, Wena (a Sudra man who regularly helped out at Gria Suci ritual events), Jero Rasman's brothers, and some other Sudra neighbours. Wena's sister Nyoman Tilem, Jero Rasman, Jero Sekar (Gus Oman's wife), and several other local women staffed the kitchen and made *banten* offerings.

Brahmana were certainly prominent among *banjar* members taking part in the marriage rites, but there were no *patus* Brahmana T-shirts worn at any stage. Nor was there any exclusive activity by the Brahmana present (or indeed by the high-*kasta* people as a group), such as eating separately from the Sudra *banjar* members.

Some aspects of the wedding rites, however, clearly marked the fact that this was a marriage between two people - and two families - of high *kasta* status. The political power imperatives behind many pre-colonial high-*kasta* marriage alliances may have moderated in the modern state, but considerations of what constituted a "good match" were still important to both families involved in the wedding of Dewi and Gus Tra (as he was known). Aji was well connected with the civil administration, including his childhood friend Ida Bagus Oka (governor of Bali at the time). The Kemenuh Brahmana were both wealthy and influential in the pan-Bali Brahmana movement then engaged in building a Brahmana shrine at the Besakih "mother temple".

A marriage uniting these two young Brahmana was highly auspicious from the *kasta* viewpoint and also strategically useful to both families. Dewi's family stood to gain a prestigious and affluent ally in the Kemenuh branch of the clan, while they in turn might expect to improve their access to the upper echelons of the Bali government administration.

These were considerations that transcended *banjar* solidarity, but the *kasta* element was obvious to all *banjar* members taking part in the marriage rites. Some of the status-marking features of the proceedings were found in the details, such as the special headdresses (*gelungan agung*) worn by bride and groom. But the most telling demonstration of *kasta* supremacy occurred when Dewi, in full *adat* costume, was carried

bodily at a certain stage on his shoulders by Wena, the low-*kasta* neighbour who had known her since childhood. There could hardly have been a more cogent symbol of the status gap between Triwangsa and commoner. At a later stage, when Dewi and Gus Tra were to leave the *gria* as man and wife, both were carried on ornate sedan chairs - by Sudra volunteers, some from the *banjar* and some from the Kemenuh retinue. This was not done at Sudra weddings, several of which I attended, in Sepenan and elsewhere.

Since *banjar* members were willing to take part in the family rituals of high-*kasta* community members, where such rather blatant assertions of *kasta* status were made, I concluded that the basically egalitarian *banjar* ethos included in practice a tolerance of such status assertions, in the interests of community harmony. Indeed this was the gist of informants' views on the matter. Wena himself even declared that he felt privileged to have been able to carry Dewi in that context. But other (Sudra) informants - young men who were regular visitors to the *gria* - were indirectly critical of the "sedan chair" episode, which they suggested was "*kolot*" (old-fashioned, out of step with the modern world). In putting it this way they were avoiding a direct criticism of the status system as such (but certainly implying it).

There was clearly a range of views on the issue of the inherent clash of ideologies when hierarchical status was asserted in contexts involving *banjar* community participation. Sadra, the *klian adat*, pointed out that occasions such as Dewi's wedding were more family affairs than *banjar* events. If the family in question happened to be a high-*kasta* one, the employment of certain traditional trappings of a status-marking nature was something they were entitled to do. Any *banjar* members who were averse to such reminders of status differences need not attend these events.

The largest Satria ritual that occurred during the year that I lived in the *banjar*, described next, was a case in point. Although well attended, a careful check (with my wife's invaluable assistance - she knew virtually everyone present) revealed that very few Sudra people were there. This may have been through apathy more than through aversion to witnessing status differences proclaimed. However, it transpired that another *kasta*-based *patus* association had organised the event, and input from the *banjar* community as a whole was not really required - except to show community solidarity. In the event, such a show of solidarity from low-*kasta* *banjar* members did not eventuate.

The combined wedding and tooth-filing at Jero Gede

I attended what turned out to be a relatively modest *karya* ritual event at the high Satria *puri* Jero Gede in Sepenan Kaja. The occasion was the *adat* wedding of a son of

Gung Kak Rangki, of Jero Gede, (uncle of the village head Gung Ngurah). A tooth-filing was held at the same time - of the son and his new wife, together with Gung Rangki's one unmarried and two married daughters¹⁰, and a ten-year-old son of his through an extramarital liaison (acknowledged by the father and resident at the *puri*, therefore termed an *astra* child - not entitled to his father's *kasta* title).

The *banjar* was not invited as a whole (the usual case) to attend this event. Rather, there was plenty of advance notice given, with the implication that *banjar* members wishing to help out on the day could advise the *puri* of their willingness to do so beforehand. In the event, only a handful of Sudra *banjar* members did so. My wife's uncle through marriage (with her father's sister), Pak De Regeg, was one of them. He was a near neighbour of the *puri* and also skilled in the ritual chanting (*mekidung*) used at such ceremonies. The other Sudra *banjar* members present, who served coffee and snacks to the guests and performed other support roles, turned out to be people who had an ongoing servant-like relationship with the *puri* - in one or two cases, even on a hereditary basis. These people (like some others I spoke with at Gria Kemenuh) styled themselves *parekan*. The term denoted a servant or trusted retainer.

It was at this event that I first heard of the existence of yet another *patus* association; this time, not surprisingly, the *patus* Satria. Of the two or three hundred guests there to witness Gung Kak Rangki's *karya*, practically all were Satria. This Satria turnout was quite feasible, given the large population of "lesser" Satria (Dewa/Desak titles) in both SK and ST *banjars*. Since all Anak Agung people claim kinship at some genealogical level, the residents of *puri* Jero Tengah were invited (in fact they were not closely related to the SK *puri*) and with them many other Satria from that *banjar* also attended.

Subsequent enquiries revealed that the *patus* Satria had the same informal status as the Sudra *patus jaba* mentioned previously. There were no "uniforms" or regular meetings - just an understanding that members of this *kasta* status-group would be the core organisers of any non-funeral ritual events held by fellow Satria members of the *banjar*. Unlike the case of the *patus* Brahmana, however, I heard of no expressed abstention or disapproval by particular Satria of the *patus* concept.

My suggestion of an implicit undermining of *banjar* solidarity represented by the *patus* concept was rejected out of hand by Satria people, including Dewa Sumpang and Gung Aji Raka of Jero Gede. They claimed that the *patus* was simply a way of easing the considerable ritual burden that all *banjar* families must bear, and at the same time spare the *banjar* as a whole from a collective obligation - even a merely moral one - to attend every significant ceremony at every *banjar* member's houseyard. And, alluding to the *soroh* clan concept, they said that it was only natural if such *patus* associations were based

on clan membership. The various *patus* groups did not in their view represent an incipient disintegration of *banjar* solidarity, but rather a "logical" division of labour in the family ritual sphere. They pointed out that no such division existed in the secular activities of the *banjar*, such as the weekly *gotong royong* maintenance group sessions.

At the tooth-filing and *adat* wedding, similar status-marking devices to those employed at my sister-in-law's wedding were used. An additional feature was the unequivocal ritual reference to status-group endogamy. Gung Rangki's son, the bridegroom, was carried between the pavilions used for the ceremony by low-*kasta* retainers. His unmarried sister received the same treatment. The other two sisters, both of whom had "married down" to low-*kasta* men, had to walk, as did the bride (also low-*kasta*) and Gede, the *astra* boy.

Whether this display of *kasta* status within the ritual might have outraged any egalitarian sentiments of Sudra *banjar* members in attendance was academic, as there were so few of the latter at the ceremony. Those who were there, being "attached" to the Satria house as retainers, were more likely to see the ritual assertions of *kasta* status as standard operating procedure in a context which basically had nothing to do with the *banjar* community as such. They were not there representing the *banjar*. Essentially, no-one was there that day purely in that capacity. To the extent that the many unrelated Satria members of the *banjar* were there to support a fellow Satria's ritual, the event was an example of status-group separatism. To the extent that they were there to support the family ritual of a prominent and popular *banjar* member (which Gung Rangki certainly was - he routinely mixed with Sudra *banjar* members), however, the event also reflected *banjar* solidarity.

Dewa Sumpang claimed the latter motivation. Nevertheless, the absence of any significant Sudra presence and the predominant attendance of Satria status-group members at the event pointed to a degree of separation between the *puri* and Satria *kasta* members more generally, and the overall *banjar* community. In fact, several Brahmana from the *banjar* (including Aji and Gus Oman) also attended, and sat together with the Anak Agung group in a conspicuous position of honour during the rites. For me, at least, this only reinforced the impression that this was very much a high-*kasta* occasion, although the rites being undertaken were typical life cycle rites that all *banjar* member families held at some stage - with the voluntary assistance of fellow *banjar* members, regardless (according to *banjar* ideology) of status differences.

Status submerged in egalitarian banjar communal activities

The banjar community odalan

By contrast with the ceremonies at Jero Gede just described, the *kasta* status of *banjar* members was not asserted during the celebration of the *odalan* anniversary of the *banjar* temple. This modest temple, located right beside the *bale banjar* meeting pavilion, symbolised the sacred aspect of the *banjar* community. There were no *pelelinggih* god-seats dedicated to specific ancestors or tutelary deities (as found in some *banjar* shrines). A lone *padmasana* stood, in its usual position, in the corner nearest Gunung Agung. The term *pura* (a temple rather than a family shrine) was used for the *banjar* temple, showing the importance that it held for the *banjar*, and demonstrating that the community had a sacred basis. Informants described the *pura*'s purpose as "a place to honour the gods who protect the *banjar*".

The *odalan* observances for the *pura banjar* took much the same form, albeit on a smaller scale, as they did for the *odalan* of the village's death temple (*pura dalem*), described in the previous Chapter. Ornate *banten* offerings were prepared in quantity, and a formal procession was mounted to fetch water from the holy spring above the *banjar*. The *pedanda* high priest from Gria Angkatan conducted a short rite in the *pura*.

People came in small groups or individually throughout the day, dressed in *adat* costume as befitted the religious nature of the event, to pray and take holy water. Significantly, from the perspective of *banjar* solidarity, community members of all status rankings, including Brahmana and the high Satria from Jero Gede, attended and took their turn to pray at the community's own shrine.

There was thus no sign of status-based separatism in the ritual celebration of the *banjar* temple's anniversary. Since the form of prayer used on these (*odalan*) occasions was very much an obeisance to higher powers¹¹, the willingness of high-*kasta banjar* members to publicly humble themselves in this way was testimony to the status accorded to the gods of the *banjar*. It was also an acknowledgment by the high-*kasta* members of the value of *banjar* community solidarity, and the need for all members to pay due respect to the divine guardians of the *banjar*.

The only indication to the contrary was the admission (by my wife's family) that the Brahmana of the *banjar* would feel unable to pray at the *pura banjar* if there were no *padmasana* there. This was consistent with the Brahmana attitude adopted to praying publicly at the *odalan* of the village temples, as previously described. Not all *banjar*

temples had a *padmasana*, but the one at SK's temple had been in place for many years. Thus, the potential boycott by Brahmana people of the banjar community's *odalan* was, in practice, not an issue. The latent existence of this attitude, however, did underscore the inherent tension between the ideologies of egalitarian communalism and hierarchical status.

The annual "bar" at the banjar pavilion

A very "modern" secular event, organised by the *banjar* and held in conjunction with the *odalan* of the *banjar* temple, was the *bar*. This was a recent tradition, the primary aim of which was fundraising for the *banjar* coffers. The *bale banjar* meeting pavilion was decorated and set up to resemble something between a restaurant and a discotheque - complete with jukebox and flashing lights, with a large sign out front. Eiseman (1990:78) reports a similar practice in the Jimbaran area, where the term *amahl* (funds, fundraising) was used, and the event was organised specifically by the young men and women of the *banjar* (*seka teruna-teruni*).

Over several nights, *banjar* volunteers operated a restaurant at the SK *bale banjar*. Cooking was done in a nearby outbuilding. The patrons were mainly people from adjacent *banjar* and from Gianyar town - mostly young adults. There were even printed menus from which guests could order. The fare was the standard fried rice, *nasi campur*, satay, etc, with soft drink or outrageously overpriced beer to wash it down. Meals were served by young women from the *banjar*, looking their best in full *adat* costume. Their very traditional appearance, and the exaggerated decorum with which they took the orders and served the meals, contrasted wildly with the thumping rock music and strobe lights in the background.

My wife said that these *bar*, as they were called, were becoming popular across the island. The most attractive young women from the *banjar* (all status rankings were involved) were chosen to wait on tables, with the aim (this was freely admitted) of pulling in a steady stream of young male customers. The latter would hopefully spend up on food and beer, while enjoying the ambience - in all respects.

There were many fascinating cultural aspects of the phenomenon of the *bar* - not least the sexual ambivalence indicated by the use of the young female waitresses as self-conscious drawcards, but dressed in strict *adat* costume (with the message "look but don't touch"?). However, for present purposes, what is germane is the fact that, as with

the *banjar* temple *odalan*, *kasta* status was clearly considered irrelevant to the organisation of the *bar*. There were high-*kasta* people among those cooking and serving the food, acting as cashiers, and generally sitting around in case they were needed, along with Sudra *banjar* members.

Serving food to status inferiors contravened *kasta* norms, but this was obviously not an issue in the *bar* context. There was a definite sacral sub-text to the otherwise very "modern" *bar*. Most of the *banjar* men also wore *adat* costume, complete with *udeng* headdress. The young women waiters, as well as wearing full *adat* costume, even had small pinches of rice grains (*bija*) stuck to their foreheads - as one does after praying at a temple or shrine. In this case, of course, it was the *banjar* temple.

There was a distinctly religious/*adat* tone underlying the extraordinary quasi-disco surface appearance of the *bar*. After all, the overall context was that of the *banjar* community temple's *odalan*. Apparently in keeping with the spirit of *banjar* solidarity, people of high *kasta* status worked alongside fellow *banjar* members, without regard for the usual status distinctions. For example, it would normally be a breach of *kasta* norms if a low-*kasta* member said to a high-*kasta* waiter, "Dayu, this meal is for table five" (effectively giving a status superior an order). In the *bar* context, however, this was routine.

As in other contexts where people stressed the *seka* (egalitarian special-interest group) principle, such as during the *banjar* temple *odalan* itself, the explanation was that status was put aside (was, in fact, irrelevant) in the interests of achieving a successful community project outcome. In this case, it was running a *bar* that would win kudos from the surrounding area, and make a good profit for the *banjar* as well. My wife (a Brahmana) said that (when living in Denpasar) she used to travel to the village specifically to participate in the *banjar's bar* nights. Her *kasta* status did not, in that context, prevent her from doing any of the required tasks. Other high-*kasta banjar* members that I spoke to said that they greatly enjoyed the *bar* - it was a good opportunity to meet people from outside the rather restricted (especially for young adults) social milieu of the *banjar* community.

At the same time, they felt they were doing something of value, as a community, that was different from the more routine ritual and *gotong royong* mutual aid expressions of *banjar* solidarity. Despite the sacral overtones, informants thought that the *bar* context was basically a modern, secular undertaking. The *kasta* status of individual *banjar* members participating in the *bar* was not lost, of course, simply because it was a "modern" or non-*adat* event. But they thought that, in that context, the feeling of community solidarity overrode existing status differences.

Also, the *bar* was a very new and novel activity for the *banjar*, and provided none of the familiar social contexts in which status differences were elicited or could be expressed. For one thing, the *bar*'s basic rationale was the service of refreshments and entertainment by the *banjar* community for non-members - for *banjar* outsiders. This in itself established a dichotomy of "us and them" - automatically tending to unite the *banjar* with reference to the outsider group, and tending to focus *banjar* attention on the skills and roles necessary to successfully carry out the *bar* project. These skills had nothing to do with the status positions of members.

Also, the traditional status ranking of the *bar*'s customers was often unknown - meaning that Indonesian was used with the customers (thereby eliminating the element of the status-marking Balinese language registers). The setting was very much like a modern urban restaurant and nothing like any of the more traditional settings that were the scene of interaction between *banjar* members, with their varying status rankings: public temples, the *banjar* meeting pavilion, the houseyards of member families, roadside coffee stalls, and the like. In such settings, people had been trained since childhood (Howe, 1991:452, 461) to react appropriately to other *banjar* members of higher, equal, or lower status. This training was thoroughly absorbed, and reproduced in stereotyped responses as the context, and one's position in the status hierarchy, required.

But in the *bar* setting, most of the social props that prompted the appropriate status-marking responses were absent. The *bale banjar* itself, in fact the physical scene of the *bar* activity, had been transformed into something exciting and vaguely foreign. The novel setting, and the motivation for communal solidarity inherent in the *bar* rationale, meant that the egalitarian community was to the forefront, and *kasta* status in abeyance, while the *banjar*'s *bar* was running.

Kerja bakti: *banjar communal work groups*

I alluded above to the regular Sunday morning "working bees" organised by the *banjar* for the purposes of general maintenance of community property (including temples). The *kul-kul* slit gong would sound around seven o'clock every Sunday to summon (in theory) at least one male from each houseyard to the *bale banjar* pavilion. After brief discussion of the chores to be done (usually already discussed during the week), the work party would move off, tools in hand, to clear clogged roadside drains, repair washaways in side roads, repaint the *bale banjar*, decorate a public temple for an upcoming *odalan*, etc.

I took part on a couple of these occasions, and witnessed parts of many other such "working bees", both on Sunday mornings and when larger projects were undertaken, such as the re-flooring of the *bale banjar*.

The (Indonesian) terms used to refer to this communal activity were *gotong royong* (mutual aid) or, most commonly, *kerja bakti* (service¹²; work done out of devotion, not in anticipation of material reward). *Bakti* is also Balinese, where it has much the same meaning, including a definite religious connotation. *Mebakti* was also the term used for the act of offering prayer/obeisance to the gods at a temple or shrine. It was significant that these largely mundane tasks, when performed self-consciously as a community undertaking, had religious overtones, as implied by the terminology employed.

It was also significant that high-*kasta* people took part and shared equally in the work at hand during this community service activity. Brahmana and Satria men were regularly up to their knees in foul-smelling mud, cleaning out blocked roadside ditches, alongside their Sudra *banjar* neighbours. There seemed to be no sort of work that the high-*kasta* members would refuse to do while engaged in *kerja bakti* service. Back at the Brahmana *gria* or at the Satria *puri*, however, low-*kasta* retainers would be much more likely to perform the more menial tasks. That is, in the context of specifically community-oriented mutual aid, *kasta* differences were all but ignored¹³ in favour of joint service by and for the *banjar* community. In this context, the pre-eminence of the egalitarian *banjar* ideology was publicly acknowledged and reconfirmed.

The Limits of Factionalism

The foregoing discussion has inevitably focused on identifiable groups more than on individuals, because the overall focus is the clash of two ideologies identified with two major groupings of *banjar* community members: the *kasta* elite (associated with a hierarchical world-view) and the *banjar* community itself (associated with an egalitarian ethos).

There was no simple dichotomy, however. The *kasta* elite in Sepenan Kaja, as elsewhere, lived among the Sudra majority, sharing most of the everyday experiences of life with their neighbours. Officially (according to *banjar* rules) and in practice - at least, in *banjar*-oriented contexts - the *kasta* elite were *banjar* members with the same standing as Sudra members. Hence, the *kasta* elite in fact formed a subset of the *banjar* community. Since the elite members universally acknowledged their membership of this

community (nobody ever denied this), there was no true separatism or secession by the Triwangsa/*kasta* elite from the *banjar*.

On the other hand, the development whereby *kasta*-based (including low-*kasta*) *patus* associations had begun to play a major role in the organising of life cycle ritual of *patus* member families represented a significant challenge to the mutual aid rationale of the *banjar* community. This was a recent development. Such assertions of factional self-sufficiency, if the trend continued, would erode the *banjar* ethos of an encompassing mutual aid contract that stood above factionalism of any kind.

Against this trend, however, was the lack of unanimity on the *patus* issue within the various status-groups, or for that matter within the general Sudra population or any of its own identifiable subsets (mainly the Pasek and Pande *dadia* kingroups). The *patus* Brahmana, for example, was keenly supported by only a handful of core members, with perhaps a dozen other Brahmana men prepared to turn out "in uniform" on occasions such as the funeral described above. There was village-wide unanimity among the Brahmana in their refusal to pray at public temples lacking a *padmasana*. However, many Brahmana people from the *banjar* were either apathetic or even hostile to the separatism that the *patus* associations implied.

The same applied to the *patus* Satria, also *kasta*-based, and the *patus* Sudra/*jaba* - again, *kasta*-based, but in the subaltern sense that its actual or potential membership was "outside" (*jaba*) the *kasta* elite. The wedding and tooth-filing at the Satria *puri* Jero Gede was probably the most telling case of *kasta* group separatism that I observed. Even in that case, local Satria who attended said that they did so out of *banjar* solidarity rather than *kasta* status-group solidarity. I have no doubt that, for some of them at least, this was true.

The point to be made is that membership of a status-group - even among the more conservative members, who took great pride in their *kasta* status - did not automatically obviate commitment to the ideals of the *banjar* ethos. For some - probably many - membership of the SK *banjar* community was as much a valued part of their identity as was their membership in a (*banjar*-transcending) status-group. Aji and Gus Oman were good examples of this. Some, such as Gus Indra, even clearly put the *banjar* first. The locus of tension between the two conflicting ideologies of hierarchy and egalitarian community was not fundamentally situated at the group level, but within individuals. Group members wanted to show loyalty and solidarity with their status-group (or title-group), but at the same time felt a part of the wider community, and also wished to continue as members in good standing of that community. Because of this, disciplined factionalism along status lines was difficult to achieve, for those who were inclined to put their own group ahead of the *banjar*. Most status-group members would always feel some

ambivalence towards suggestions for action that inherently or explicitly excluded the *banjar* - as long as they felt that they were a part of that community, felt committed to the *banjar* mutual aid ideology, and felt that they would, sooner or later, need its help.

Notes

¹ In a *joged* performance, a young woman in traditional dance costume dances a subtly provocative solo, calling up male partners one at a time from the audience to dance with her. The male is supposed to try to pinch the dancer's bottom during his dance, while she deftly repels these impertinences with her fan. The atmosphere at the *joged* I attended was a potent mix of hilarity and what I interpreted as sexual tension - leading perhaps to the shoving I mention between members of different *banjars*. There were a number of high-*kasta* villagers at the *joged* in question, mixing in freely with their fellow residents.

² I often heard of cases of straightforward personality clashes, and cases where these had widened to involve family members on both sides. A unique case was that of animosity between the family of the alcoholic madman Gus Kanda and the rest of the *banjar* residents, whom he terrorised on a daily basis. The residents resented this nuisance, naturally enough, but Gus Kanda's family also resented the fact that the *banjar* was not more accommodating in this matter. In another case, a local family whose members had done well in the tourism industry and had bought a new car was disliked by many *banjar* members because of the family's "snobbish attitude" and alleged propensity for sharp practice in their dealings with others. The politics of reputation were frequently invoked during casual conversations in the courtyard of our *gria*. The fact that the environment of those conversations was a Brahmana *gria* probably militated against me hearing anything overtly critical of high-*kasta* people. I heard of many cases of ill-feeling between individuals and families, but in general the status of the people involved was not mentioned as a relevant factor. The main exception to this was the *patus* Brahmana, mentioned previously and also below, in the context of the funeral of my wife's uncle.

³ The view that such life-cycle rituals must be crowded with participants to be judged a success is long established in Bali (Franken, in Swellengrebel 1984:250)

⁴ The *banjar* was obliged to take part in certain aspects of the rites for the dead only; other life cycle ritual was basically the sole responsibility of the family involved. However, the *banjar* could be formally invited to help out on such occasions (and thereby also supply a satisfyingly large crowd of participants to make the affair *ramai*). If such an invitation was accepted at a formal *banjar* meeting, the *banjar* was then obligated to attend and provide labour for cooking and other routine assistance. The potential sanction of a refusal by the *banjar* of such an invitation was a powerful incentive for members to maintain their reputation as *banjar* community members in good standing. This certainly applied equally to high *kasta* members. Rejection by the *banjar* of a request for *banjar* assistance with a major *karya*, such as the wedding of my sister-in-law described below, would be a huge embarrassment for the family concerned. Such rejection could well be employed as a sanction against a particular family or group perceived to be promoting *kasta* group separatism - although high-*kasta banjar* members would doubtless argue against such a sanction in the *banjar* meeting context.

⁵ The case of the prominent *banjar* resident Gus Agung, the Gianyar *sekwilda*, illustrates this point. As a Brahmana he had the highest *kasta* status; as a very senior official in the district administration, he also had considerable power and influence. He even had a reputation as a *balian* traditional healer. Yet he was not much liked in the *banjar*, having rightly or wrongly given the impression of arrogance, which is inevitably linked to the status issue when a high-*kasta* person is the subject. As a consequence, *banjar* support for his family rituals was minimal - although he had a retinue of *banjar* members in the neighbourhood, as previously mentioned, and this patronage ensured that adequate numbers of helpers were always on hand when needed.

⁶ Again, it is difficult to generalise about such issues. Some members of my wife's family had had considerable exposure to foreign/Western visitors, regarded themselves as "progressive", and thought that family members should be free to marry whomever they chose. Others feared the eventual demise of *kasta* status altogether if endogamy norms were abandoned in the name of something as relatively trivial as

"falling in love". It was to absolve the latter family members of any complicity (through foreknowledge) in our own endogamy-violating wedding that my wife insisted on an elopement.

⁷ When he owned two art shops in the tourist belt of Ubud in the 1980s, Aji reportedly made very substantial contributions to the *bale banjar* meeting pavilion, the *pura banjar* shrine, and the *pura melanting* (market temple). Such contributions were greatly valued, particularly the shrine refurbishment, as they were perceived as "lifting the spiritual tone" of the *banjar* (Dayu Tu Suwati, pers. comm.)

⁸ Unlike at funerals, where the cost of food and drink was borne by the *banjar*, other "family" rituals had to be paid for by the family or families involved. A local family that "invited the *banjar*" in SK had to supply at least five suckling pigs, plus a list of other comestibles, the cost of which was prohibitive. In fact, informants could not remember the last time anyone had "invited the *banjar*" to a family ritual occasion.

⁹ The first stage was an informal visit by the groom's family, at which details of the practicalities of the following stages were discussed. Of course, the marriage had been previously decided on by the couple themselves, first, and then in consultation with their families. There was no hint of an "arranged" match, although the extent to which childhood conditioning about the desirability of a same-*kasta* union may have motivated either partner to the marriage cannot be determined.

¹⁰ The fact that his daughters had married without having had their teeth filed beforehand indicated a severe lack of finances on their father's part. In such cases, status-group pride often means that other relatives assist the high-*kasta* but impecunious father to hold such life cycle rites at the appropriate time. In this case, no such help seems to have been forthcoming prior to the present event- which may be a comment on relations between Gung Rangki and his own relatives. He certainly had a reputation for gambling.

¹¹ In the case of the *pura banjar* of SK, these higher powers were deified ancestors considered collectively, in their role as guardians of the *banjar* community. They were invited down to earth to visit and receive the homage of *banjar* members, in the usual pattern of *odalan* celebrations (whether for village or *banjar* temples, or even for small houseyard shrines).

¹² "Service" in the communal interest, as here, is not to be confused with the "service" rendered by commoner villagers to a high-*kasta* residence, such as a Satria *puri*. Here the term was *ngayah*, as in *ngayah ke puri*. Such quasi-feudal "service" is rooted in an ideology diametrically opposed to the egalitarian basis of the *banjar's kerja bakti* community service.

¹³ Status differences in the *kerja bakti* context were acknowledged only through language register and *kasta* title usage. This aspect of status-marking was never elided in any context, as far as I could determine, and in this respect egalitarian tendencies never entirely obliterated *kasta* status acknowledgment between *banjar* members.

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Culture, Status and Power

In the context of a society where social status was an important factor yet the down-playing of status was prescribed in acknowledged "egalitarian community", i.e. *banjar* or *desa* ritual and corporate communal contexts, as well as in "modern" government/administrative contexts, the remarks of Ortner seem pertinent. Intending to redress a perceived overemphasis on "the centrality of domination within the contemporary practice framework" (1984:157) of Western anthropology, she wrote:

I am as persuaded as many of the authors that to penetrate into the workings of asymmetrical social relations is to penetrate to the heart of much that is going on in any given system. I am equally convinced, however, that such an enterprise, taken by itself, is one-sided. Patterns of cooperation, reciprocity, and solidarity constitute the other side of the coin of social being. (ibid)

I have sought to illustrate in earlier Chapters how Sepenan villagers and Balinese from other areas managed to integrate entrenched social inequality (the *kasta* hierarchy) and the equally well-established communal egalitarianism of *banjar* and *desa* solidarity. The picture was complicated by a general tendency to group affiliation and allegiance, where some types of groups stressed or were based on traditional status criteria (notably the *patus* Brahmana) while others were based on the *seka* principle of the status-effacing common-interest group (*subak* irrigation collectives, the village gamelan orchestra). Often, individual villagers were members of both types of groups.

In the preceding descriptions of various contexts in which the interplay of these two intrinsically conflicting ideologies of hierarchy and equality, I touched upon certain theoretical considerations that may usefully be amplified in the following discussion on the implications of the present field study for some wider debates on the topic of social inequality.

Dumontian hierarchy: Bali as not-India

In Chapter Two I addressed the question of whether the Hindu Indian caste model of social organisation - with its emphasis on relative purity as hierarchising principle - was applicable to Balinese society. I found in the fieldwork village and in other locales that

a general principle of purity did indeed have a degree of currency. I was reminded of this every time I washed clothes and had to hang them out to dry in such a way that nobody could walk under them - a ritually polluting event. In fact, the clothes had to be at a lower level than the heads of passers-by, meaning that in practice they were spread over low bushes in the sun. This way, only passing dogs and chickens were at risk of incurring a *sebel* pollution.

However, despite this and the other examples already given of the currency of ritual pollution as a Balinese leitmotif, I found that the concept lacked the cultural pervasiveness that would have been needed to qualify the purity/pollution axis as a fundamental dichotomy on which a Dumontian hierarchical social system could develop.

This is not to say that purity was irrelevant to informants in their everyday lives, or did not extend much beyond the issue of hanging out the washing, or avoiding sleeping in an upstairs room when menstruating. Vestiges of caste-like commensality rules still existed. High *kasta* people would not eat "leftover" food (e.g. share a plate of satay) of lower-*kasta* friends or neighbours. And *pedanda* high priests would only eat from plates that had never been used by anyone else.

On the other hand, opportunities to eat other people's "leftovers" were in practice uncommon; generally, people simply ate their own meals, whether in family or larger, ceremonial contexts. Unlike in strict Indian caste instances, where Brahmin clans often use Brahmin cooks to prepare their food, Balinese Brahmana of my acquaintance would all eat food prepared by commoner/*jaba* cooks in their service.

Indian caste-type commensality rules were much diluted in Bali. After the more important lifestyle rites, the families staging the ceremonies would normally send parcels of food prepared for the occasion around to the houseyards of friends and neighbours. The practice was called *ngejot*. Crucially, the social status of either the food givers or the receivers was irrelevant. The only instance of hierarchical status being asserted in these contexts was the insistence that food offerings (*sajen*) actually employed as part of a ceremony could not be later consumed by people of a lower status ranking than that of the sponsors of the ritual.

In Chapter Two I also touched upon the issue of inter-group prestations in Hindu India, as discussed by Raheja (1988) and several other authors. Raheja suggested a centre-periphery model as an alternative to the hierarchical model. She noted the important ritual (as well as military defender) functions of Ksatriya caste groups in Indian villages where Brahmins were absent. The ritualised exchange of gifts in these villages underscored the

religious/cosmological significance of the caste group otherwise associated with temporal power and rule in the totalising hierarchical model proposed for India by Dumont.

The food prestations I observed in Bali bore some resemblance to the Indian cases reported by Raheja. The local *puri*, residence of the nearest thing Sepenan had to a royal palace, did distribute such gifts on a regular basis. To an extent, this was expected by the surrounding community, as the *puri* was still relatively wealthy (although definitely in decline financially), and some such largesse was considered appropriate.

However, similar prestations were also made by commoner houseyards whose budgets stretched far enough to permit it. The *puri* did sometimes receive food packages from a commoner neighbour whose family was holding a wedding or tooth-filing or similar ritual. The only stipulation was that a certain minimum standard was mandatory. One could send four sticks of satay in the package if the recipient was another commoner neighbour, but 21 sticks was the minimum if the package was destined for the Satria neighbours at the *puri*.

That is, status was relevant in the degree of splendour of the gift. Status was not, however, of sufficient salience that the flow of such prestations went only one way: from commoner to lord, as a feudal-style tribute model would require; nor yet in the other direction, as in Raheja's Indian example, where the high-caste villagers distributed ritual gifts to commoner neighbours to consolidate a ritual bond whose significance transcended the purely material aspects of the transaction.

Despite the presence of some of the other trappings of the hierarchical status ascribed by Dumont to Indian caste society - such as status-marking language register usage, moderate deferential body language - purity and the pure/impure asymmetric opposition could not be sustained in my analysis as being of sufficient cultural salience to underpin a truly Dumontian model of Indic caste hierarchy for the Balinese case.

This conclusion supports the findings of most authors on the subject, including Howe (1989, 1985), Warren (1993, esp. p 88 and 93, n. 39), Duff-Cooper (1993), and even Guernonprez (1987, 1990a, 1990b). The latter, while still wishing to posit a hierarchising fundamental asymmetric opposition based on a cardinal value, admits that purity is not feasible as the value in question. He substitutes instead the Balinese *kaja/kelod* high/low "value-idea" (as Dumont would put it), as I mention in Chapter Two.

Other authors have found a more complex picture of status ideology across Balinese society. Howe (esp. 1989) found a gradation in the degree of presence and salience of *kasta* status, with virtually no *kasta* representation in the mountain villages, where pre-Majapahit social organisation still held sway, shading into status-dominated villages in the

coastal plains, where the once-mighty courts of the *rajas* were located. Howe suggests an ecological explanation for this - the relative poverty of the upland villages militated against an agricultural surplus considered necessary to sustain a basically parasitic *kasta* "gentry". Ultimately, Howe steers a course between analytical approaches that privilege ideology and those emphasising a materialist reading, veering perhaps closer to the latter as he warns us not to "confuse the local idiom of power with the real material basis of that power" (1991:451).

In Sepenan, times had changed and the idea of the local *kasta* gentry appropriating the fruits of the labour of the peasantry seemed anachronistic - if only because wealth, especially in rice land, had largely passed out of the hands of the local Satria gentry, and few commoner villagers were in any way dependent on the *puri* for their livelihood. The fact that villagers elected a Satria man from the *puri* to be village head in the national government administrative system did reflect popular support for the *kasta* ideology, in that they were willing to elect someone from the traditional, *kasta*-ordained political leadership group (the Satria) to a key post of political leadership in the modern system.

This attitude certainly coincided with the occupational - indeed, the dharma - prerogative of the Ksatriya *warna* as stipulated in the Indic caste system. For that matter, the ritual duties and prerogatives of the Brahmana *pedanda* high priest in Bali also conformed to the caste model. However, I found that what Boon (1977:149) called the "radical disjunction between status and power", as postulated by Dumont as a *sine qua non* of a true caste system of social organisation, was not evident in the fieldwork village or elsewhere in Bali. This too supported the views of several authors (Miller, 1982; Connor, 1982; and a raft of other authors listed by Duff-Cooper, 1993:134).

Probably the safest conclusion to be drawn is that already arrived at by Howe (1991:452) and also Warren (1993:68ff): the concept of a hierarchy of values is an integral part of Balinese culture, but the Indic caste model is not directly applicable in Bali, despite the close resemblance of the *kasta* system to Dumont's "system of castes".

Howe (op cit) evocatively illustrates the inculcation of the basic idea of a hierarchy of worth in the teaching to young children of proper prayer positions and high language expressions used for prayer. When the children are also taught to use the same language level used to address the gods in speaking to high-*kasta* individuals, Howe notes, they tend to simultaneously absorb a model of ranked social worth - that is, a hierarchy. And, he notes, "when children . . . grow up in a world drenched in hierarchy, . . . it is consequently almost impossible to conceive of hierarchical social relations as not being in the very nature of things" (ibid).

Having lived in a Balinese village where *kasta* status had a significant presence I have some sympathy for this view of the pervasiveness of, if not the specific caste-model version, then at least a more generalised concept of hierarchy. Yet to phrase it as Howe does in this way is, I believe, to risk an essentialising gloss that could conceal the other important but incompatible ideological force of egalitarianism, which I have described in preceding Chapters. I will briefly summarise some alternative views on Balinese hierarchy in the following section.

Dualism not hierarchy: Bali as Westernmost East Indonesia

There is enough evidence from studies of the conservative, mainly upland and north coast villages where *kasta* has never penetrated (the so-called Bali Aga communities) to demonstrate a significant resemblance in social organisation between Bali and other Austronesian societies found in the area of Eastern Indonesia (Swellengrebel, 1984; Schaareman, 1986; Covarrubias, 1937; Danandjaja, 1980; Reuter, 1996; Boon, 1977, esp. p 229 n 1).

The pervasiveness of dualistic concepts in Eastern Indonesian societies has been well recorded. The pioneering work of Dutch structuralists like van Wouden (1988 [1935]) suggested a fundamental, pan-Austronesian dualistic basis for social organisation. This analysis was fleshed out in many local studies by researchers such as Fox, whose work on Rotinese society (1968, 1971, 1975) and other societies in the region (1977, 1979) stressed the symbolic evocation of underlying sets of oppositions reflecting the "complementary dualism" postulated as central to regional social organisation (Fox, 1989:44). Many of Fox's students and others have contributed regional ethnographies in a similar vein.

Without going into the intricacies and poetics of the various aspects of Eastern Indonesian social organisation and its dualism-rich ritual manifestations, as explicated by these authors, it is clear that a key feature of world views in the region is what Forth, writing on a Sumbanese society, termed "non-hierarchical inequality" (1985:114). Fox and his students refer to "precedence" to describe asymmetrical relationships between clans in many societies in Eastern Indonesia (e.g. Fox, 1989:52).

As Reuter (1992:491) implies, the term is useful to describe instances of differential valorisation between groups, clans etc based on criteria of descent from founding fathers or divine progenitors, earliest arrival on the island, and the like. More contemporary

criteria (but still doubtless informed by historical/mythic considerations), such as asymmetrical connubium practices, provide examples of non-hierarchical inequality.

A group whose women may or must marry men from a second group, but not vice versa, may be considered - in that respect, at least - "superior" to the wife-taking group. The second group may in turn be wife-givers to a third group, which is then "inferior" to the second group, and logically even more so to the first group. But if - as sometimes happens - the third group in fact marries its women to members of the first group, it is impossible to speak of any thorough-going status hierarchy operating in the society as a whole. These authors found that asymmetric evaluations abounded in the societies under study, in diverse aspects from categorisation of goods on a male-female axis to clans of varying prestige based on precedence criteria.

But Fox, citing the example of two societies ("domains") he studied on the island of Roti, convincingly makes the point that dualism in play within a given society does not guarantee a hierarchical outcome. In one domain, "dual categories are utilized socially to form lines of precedence that foster status rivalry, extend alliance relations, and perpetrate patterns of relative dependence", whereas in the other domain, although dualism was the primary organising principle, "any tendency to form lines of precedence always confronts a primary duality that undermines it", and in this domain, "systemic dualism serves as a counter to hierarchy" (1989:53).

These findings have implications for the Balinese case, despite the long-established presence of the *kasta* status hierarchy. The *kasta* model, and indeed Buddhism/Hinduism itself, were clearly imported and superimposed on pre-existing social forms. These social forms demonstrated dualistic categorisations and multiple, context-mediated status criteria (descent from founders or from illustrious "newcomer" forebears, age seniority within village councils, equal "left" and "right" divisions of such councils, the "dual authority" of ruling and priestly groups, etc) (Ottino, 1994; Howe, 1989, and esp. 1987:147; Korn, 1984 [1960]: 303ff; Warren, 1993:71; Reuter, 1996, 1999:171).

In the absence of "the encompassing religious coherence that Dumont has attributed to India" (Fox, 1989:52) in Bali, the salience of existing dualisms such as ritual purity/impurity, the mountain/sea directional axis and the gods/demonic spirits divide can be exaggerated by commentators. More specifically, analytical emphasis on one side of these dyads - the "positive" or "good" side - can lead too readily to a hierarchical interpretation where a more value-neutral dualistic interpretation is more congenial to local sensibilities.

Hence, the gods are to be honoured with due ceremony and offerings, and the demons are to be appeased, with appropriate sacrifices - each in the appointed manner and on their particular special days. Neglect of the obligations to entities of either category is equally hazardous. And, in the matter of geographical orientation, matters relating to the gods/deified ancestors are sited in the mountainward/*kaja* location, while the less refined aspects of human habitation and domestic livestock are located in the seaward/*klod* quarter. Thus, the houseyard shrine has pride of place in the *kaja-kangin* corner, while the (fiery, smoky) kitchen, toilet, and pigsty are built in the *klod* section.

Interestingly, informants did not particularly characterise this orientation in valorised, good-bad or even pure-impure terms. Rather, they explained that such local orientations simply mirrored or accorded with the more generalised orientations implicit in the *dewa/buta kala* and *kaja/klod* dyads. Conforming with these overarching spiritual axes was a religious imperative - a matter of staying in balance with the cosmos.

As to purity as a culturally salient concept, the existence of a variety of named categories of ritual uncleanness, and even a variety of degrees of the *sebel* ritual contagion, points to a gradation rather than a simple dyadic opposition. Warren (1993:62 n 4), following Howe (1980), suggests that *sebel* could in pre-*kasta* times have been one half of a value-neutral opposition, rather than an asymmetric opposition analogous to the pure-impure opposition. In support of this she quotes the "Indonesia-Bali dictionary", which defines *sebel* as a state of having an obstacle or being prevented from doing something; the implication being that *sebel* is really an unvalorised concept.

My own experience - based on, for example, the facial expressions of people giving me examples of what was *sebel* - is that *sebel* in fact is a (negatively) evaluated condition, the degree of negativity depending on the cause of the *sebel* state. Kersten's excellent Balinese-Indonesian dictionary (1984) defines *sebel* basically as "filthy" and gives a fair summary of the typical causes of the contagion, ranging from menstruation through a death in the family to murder and gross defilement of temples (for example, killing or illicit sexual relations within the temple precincts). Such uncleanness certainly prevents those affected from, for example, entering temples before the contagion is (in the worst cases) ritually erased (Kaler, 1982:109-112).

But I would see *sebel* as falling into the general category of taboos, representing a temporary spiritual discordance readily remedied by the appropriate minor ritual or, in most cases, simply by the passage of time. While there is, I believe, a general concept in Bali of such ritual inauspiciousness, comments by informants suggested that there was no widespread complementary concept that we could gloss as "purity". For example, my suggestion that a term such as *kesucian* (indeed, reflected in the name of the fieldsite

residence, Gria Suci) might be the semantic opposite of *sebel* was rejected; *kesucian* meant something akin to sacredness, but informants were adamant that the two terms did not form a logical opposed pair.

The point is - as I conclude in Chapter Two - that there was no truly pervasive concept of "purity" which could serve as a Dumontian cardinal value, capable of hierarchising the entire society in terms of hereditary groups relatively more or less endowed with such "purity".

Other apparently valorised oppositions, such as the mountain-sea/*kaja-klod* and gods-demons/*dewa-buta kala*, can also be seen, as I suggest above, as more neutral pairings- as it were, two sides of the same metaphysical coin rather than an asymmetrical encompassment of the lesser/impure by the greater/pure component (Howe 1980, 1989; Foster, 1979). The same argument can also be applied to other candidate "cardinal values" and the putative asymmetrical oppositions that have been proposed as tending to hierarchise Balinese society in various instances. Examples of this also examined in Chapter Two were the theoretical dyads village-ward/*desa-banjar* (Guermonprez 1990b) and the (very Austronesian) first settlers-newcomers (Ottino, 1994).

If these conceptual dyads are seen less as asymmetrical oppositions - with a capacity to hierarchise - and more as complementary dualisms, which do not imply hierarchy, then the general salience of hierarchy as a social "given" in Bali is weakened. In turn, the status claims of the *kasta* elite can be seen to rest purely upon the foundation of the elite's Hindu-Java antecedents, while little justification for the principle of hierarchical status can be found in pre-Hindu Balinese spirituality or *adat*.

The *kasta* elite have, of course, fought back ideologically in defence of status. In many villages, high-*kasta* groups enjoy a reduced *sebel* contagion for events such as a death in the family, compared to their commoner neighbours. This is even written into some *awig-awig* village regulations (but not at Sepenan). And at the fieldsite village, as I outlined in Chapter Five, local Brahmana declined to worship at the village's *pura desa*, citing a group unwillingness to pray to ancestors of low-*kasta* fellow villagers. This was part of a deliberate praxis of exclusiveness maintained even though deified ancestors of low-*kasta* villagers were in theory *bhatara* - perhaps not actual gods (*dewa*) but certainly "up there" in a loftier realm than that inhabited by living humans - even Brahmana (cf Barth, 1993:149). The basis of this exclusivity, again, rested on the Hindu hierarchical foundation of *kasta* status.

Hegemonic discourses and popular resistance

The extent to which low-*kasta* villagers shared in the hierarchical Hindu world-view, and hence accepted (indeed, took for granted) the status claims of the Triwangsa "gentry", was touched upon earlier (Chapter Two, esp. note 9). Such ideological dominance - if established - is of course fundamental to a Dumontian interpretation of caste society, and, in the case of Bali, to C. Geertz's view of the *Negara*.

An informant in Sepenan once told me, evidently in all seriousness, that the faces of high-*kasta* people have a "shine" about them, whereas ordinary Balinese (*anak jaba*) tend to have dull, dark complexions. My immediate reaction (not expressed to the informant, of course) was that this was a classic illustration of, if not Marxian false consciousness, then at least Gramscian hegemony in action.

As Howe (1991) points out, however, a straightforward dominant ideology approach to interpreting the apparent consent accorded by subordinate groups to their subordination by ruling elites has been criticised by authors such as Abercrombie et al (1980) and Scott (1985) (and more recently in Scott, 1990). These authors present evidence that subordinated groups are often much less ideologically coopted than a dominant ideology thesis would assume.

For instance, in the Balinese case, Howe (1991:462) points to the many critiques (canvassed in Chapter One) of Geertz's interpretation of the *Negara* as a highly consensual participation in the princely pomp of their high-*kasta* overlords by a peasantry spellbound by both the absorbing theatrics and - crucially - the hierarchical order that it symbolised. No doubt, the princes of Geertz's *Negara* were all possessed of the requisite "shining faces".

But Howe's point is that the concept of ideological hegemony as an analytical tool cannot in real societies be viewed as monolithic and unmediated by circumstance and context. Gramsci himself, as Howe points out (*ibid*), conceded that:

... subordinate groups display a kind of double consciousness: one which is grounded in common sense (and which thus remains fragmentary and incoherent) and which is tied to the level of practical activity, and another which is explicit and publicly sanctioned but superficial, and more or less in line with the dominant ideology. (1971:333)

This sets the scene for a more contingent understanding of ideological hegemony; or, as Howe puts it, "I would suggest that an ideology does not usually present itself as a complete package ... constituent themes ... can be used and manipulated by both elites and subordinate groups" (1991:463, referring to Scott, 1985:338).

A good example of this from the Balinese material would be the low-key ideological battle currently being waged by Pasek low-*kasta* title-group activists, as discussed earlier, especially in Chapter Four. This Pasek group was pressing and (in 2001) continues to press for a levelling of the status playing field by what seems to me to be a manipulation of "constituent themes" from the overall Bali-Hindu cosmology. Hence these Pasek, invoking a core Austronesian aspect of the cosmology, stress descent from an illustrious apical ancestor, while at the same time downplaying status differences between their own and other groups' ancestors - especially those of the *kasta* elite.

The Pasek self-consciously employ "egalitarian" synonyms for key terms otherwise status-marked; a prime example is their use of *sulinggih* (generic term for high priest, literally a "seat/vehicle for the gods") (Pitana, 1996:5, 1999:196). They seek to have this term adopted officially by the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, the peak body regulating Hindu religious philosophy and practice. This would result in the obsolescence of the term *pedanda*, linked of course to the Brahmana *kasta* status-group. The aim is clearly to undermine the Brahmana claim to be the exclusive source of Hindu high priests in Bali - a major aspect of the group's *kasta* status.

More widely, the dissident Pasek aim to replace the whole *kasta* hierarchical ideology with an egalitarian scenario of a profusion of named *warga* descent groups, each with its own claim to prestige based on eminent ancestors. If these same putative ancestors owed their own status to a high position in the *kasta* hierarchy, this factor is downplayed in favour of other factors such as emphasis on the spiritual power of the ancestors in question.

The point here is that the Pasek see themselves as a subordinate group under the *kasta* ideological regime and see an opportunity to rectify that situation by selective appeal to aspects of the overall Hindu-Bali cosmology, of which *kasta* status inequality is only a part and, in their view, a controversial part at that. These Pasek are devout Hindus and would be offended if this were to be questioned. They embrace Bali-Hinduism, with its emphasis on devotion to ancestors and its animist overtones as well as respect for the sacred Veda and other texts of the "high" religion, but reject the near-hegemony of the *kasta* aspect.

Hence their promotion of a discourse of a status-free "difference" between the various *warga* origin-groups that in their proposed, alternative view make up the whole of (Hindu) Balinese society, including the Triwangsa/high-*kasta* groups. This discourse emphasises the "constituent theme" of hereditary sharing in the illustriousness of ancestors, an Austronesian theme vital also to *kasta* ideology, while glossing over the

kasta-specific aspects of Veda-ordained hierarchical status, in an attempt to erode the near-hegemony of the latter in Bali.

Indeed, in his more recent work, Scott questions whether hegemonic domination of consciousness occurs much at all anywhere (1990:90ff). More common, he suggests, is the domination of *action* in the public sphere, in accordance with the expectations and "public transcript" of the ruling elite. It is then more useful to speak of a "ruling discourse" than a "ruling ideology" (1990:103). In competition with such ruling discourses are the "hidden transcripts" created by subordinated groups to discreetly critique the power elite. In the case of the Pasek just mentioned, even the ruling discourse of *kasta* hierarchy was being questioned, and acquiescence in a key plank of the *kasta* "public transcript" - namely the mandatory participation of Brahmana *pedanda* high priests at major rituals - was rejected by the more radical of the Pasek dissidents.

In Sepenan, I found evidence of both a degree of naturalisation of the hierarchical world-view and its antithesis, egalitarian communalism. A belief among some villagers that high-*kasta* neighbours had "shining faces" suggests a comprehensive internalisation of the concept of *kasta* status-group innate superiority. Such a belief, if sincerely held, comes much closer to ideological domination than the mere lip-service implied by Scott's concept of the "public transcript".

As well, the Brahmana as a group were definitely regarded by many informants as possessing a certain generalised potency. Quite apart from the near-universality of the *pedanda* high priest's monopoly on officiating at major ritual, which is related to Hindu orthodoxy, non-priest Brahmana of either sex were in demand for other spiritually-related services.

For example, tooth-filing had to be done by a Brahmana *sangging*, as mentioned earlier. At funerals, regardless of the *kasta* status of the deceased, a Brahmana relative (often this meant an affinal relative) if available was asked to ride high on the *bade* tower in which the deceased was carried to the graveyard. And before that stage, when the corpse was ritually washed by the *banjar* congregated in the family houseyard, a Brahmana or other high-*kasta* *banjar* member was appointed to wash the head. In the matter of the various *banten* offerings essential for all major ritual, Brahmana *gria* and Brahmana individuals (usually women) were considered to have a monopoly on the technical knowledge cum spiritual potency required to properly prepare these offerings.

The perceived spiritual potency (as opposed to the group's specific *kasta* dharma as rulers) of the Satria, as well, especially of the ruling house in a given area, is well documented for other parts of Bali (Schaareman, 1986; Schulte Nordholt, 1996). In

Sepenán this factor was also present to some extent, as evidenced by the "safe-keeping" of the village's spiritual icon, the *barong*, at the local Satria *puri*. In this case, Satria spiritual efficacy or potency, as well as the physical security afforded by the high walls of the *puri*, was given by villagers as a reason for selecting the *puri* for the task. The fact that a majority of villagers also elected a Satria man from the same *puri* to be their *dinas* village head - although he was not particularly prominent in village affairs or possessed of an extrovert personality - was evidence of a widespread acceptance of the "born leaders" attribute of Satria *kasta* charisma. Some villagers indeed declared their belief in this supposedly inherent quality of the Satria.

All of this suggests a fairly comprehensive internalisation of the hierarchical *kasta* world-view. However, the picture was - as we should expect - more complex than this. Hegemonic acceptance of the *kasta* system was far from universal in Sepenán, and *kasta* ideological supremacy was and is openly contested in other parts of Bali - notably by Pasek activists, as mentioned above.

In Sepenán, for example, some of the same villagers who voted for Gung Ngurah as village head also privately thought that he was something of a non-entity and quite lacking in the *wibawa* (charisma) expected of Satria leaders, as I noted in Chapter Four. Then why did they vote for him? There was after all a second candidate - low-*kasta* but technically better qualified for the position and a popular figure.

The mildly defamatory coffee-stall gossip of villagers who did not vote for Gung Ngurah could be understood as an example of Scott's "hidden transcript" - a low-key resistance to elite domination (in this case, domination of the government sphere through appeal to an ideological basis). Villagers who did vote for him yet privately were unenthusiastic about the man's ability did so for a variety of reasons. Sincere adherence to *kasta* ideology was certainly a factor for some voters. Others claimed to have voted for the Satria candidate to spare the *puri* the embarrassment of electoral defeat. This I take to still represent a conservative, pro-*kasta* viewpoint, as the argument assumes that Satria *kasta* status (more accurately here, the local standing of the family claiming Satria *kasta* status) should be preserved - as a key aspect of the "public transcript" maintaining *kasta* ideological domination.

Still others voted for the *puri* candidate because of strategic calculations about their own relationship to what they correctly perceived as the developing high-*kasta* power elite that I described earlier. Villagers who were members of the informal circle around the Sepenán Kaja *klian dinas*, Gus Oman, and his powerful patron and fellow Brahmana, Gus Agung (the Gianyar District Secretary), as well as villagers with a relationship of informal service (*parekan*) to the *puri* (home of Gung Ngurah), had a vested interest in cementing

this axis in place at the head of *dinas* village affairs. These supporters could hope to benefit materially from the patronage of the high-*kasta* elite who then controlled the finances of the *dinas* village. Indeed, such people had a stake in maintaining the "public transcript" of *kasta* elite superiority as *kasta* ideological supremacy became conflated with governmental leadership in the modern political sphere.

This process was widespread in Bali, as witness the ongoing disproportionate representation of the high-*kasta* groups in senior government positions across the province, notably at the most senior, governor and district/regency head levels.

Yet the "hidden transcript" of popular resistance to *kasta* privilege was also evident, even to myself as an outsider (and therefore not someone to be confided in on such controversial issues). I have already mentioned the relative absence of overt criticism of *kasta* status heard by myself in the fieldwork village, where I was not just an outsider (albeit married to a local) but also affiliated with a Brahmana family and by association with the village's *kasta* elite in general.

But in my travels further afield in Bali I often heard derogatory remarks about *kasta* privilege - especially about the unfairness of the hereditary aspect. This was frequently heard whenever a particular individual (usually male) from one of the *kasta* elite groups had acted in a way generally agreed to be reprehensible. Indeed there was no shortage of gossip concerning instances of this, in a variety of fields, such as reneging on gambling (usually cockfighting) debts, indiscreet womanising, sharp practice in business deals (often involving land sales), etc.

In environments where it was safe enough to do so - basically, where high-*kasta* people were absent - people criticising such behaviour would often add to their general censure the point that members of the *kasta* elite, who claimed a general superiority over their low-born neighbours, should be doubly ashamed of acting so poorly. Indeed they were obviously hypocrites for claiming moral superiority yet acting so badly. I found such reference to a criterion of exemplary behaviour reminiscent of the "standards of achievement" required of Polynesian chiefly families that claimed elite status in those societies (Chapter One). In Bali, raising this point was clearly one tactic in the "hidden transcript" of resistance to *kasta* hegemony.

Also, several low-*kasta* informants in university circles were very articulate in their critiques of *kasta* privilege. They pointed to the still-common practice of the *surya-sisia* relationship. This is an avowedly reciprocal arrangement between a Brahmana *gria* housing a *pedanda* high priest and a number of village families (sometimes a large number, from the local village and from further afield). The *pedanda* supplies holy water

for and officiates at the rites of these clients (*sisia*). In return, they undertake to support significant activities at their priest's (*surya* - their "sun") residence. This is typically major ritual, for which the *sisia* bring offerings and supply labour, but can involve more mundane activities such as building a new pavilion in the *gria*. Dissenting informants suggested that this arrangement was close to feudal servitude in the guise of religious piety.

The same charge of quasi-feudalism was made by these informants in relation to the similar arrangement that still exists in many villages (including Sepenan) wherein villagers do voluntary work at the local high Satria residence (*ngayah ke puri*), usually also when the *puri* is staging a major ritual.

Whether expressed at a roadside *warung* coffee stall or at a university cafe, the readiness of low-*kasta* Balinese to criticise *kasta* privilege was certainly part of the "hidden transcript" of resistance to elite ideological hegemony. In fact, badly-behaved individuals from the *kasta* elite - particularly from its upper echelons, the Brahmana and higher Satria - "let the side down" more than they perhaps appreciated. Such transgressions in the public arena tended to undermine the fundamental hereditary charisma aspect of *kasta* status itself, as critics of *kasta* were quick to point out.

Status subverted, or ignored? - *kasta* rendered irrelevant in public ritual

Writing with Balinese instances in mind, Warren (1993:82ff) and Boon (1990:68) both speculate on the analytical usefulness of Bhaktin's carnivalesque for an examination of potentially oppositional undercurrents in Balinese public ritual. Drawing on the earlier observations of Bateson and Mead (1942), Warren refers to the often boisterous and occasionally chaotic manner that the *bade* funeral tower is conveyed by *banjar* members to the cemetery. When the deceased is one of the *kasta* elite, destructive or otherwise ostentatiously disrespectful treatment of the funeral tower and even the corpse itself (when the deceased is personally very unpopular) has been seen by these authors as representing attacks - in a traditionally-sanctioned context - by the community against the ideology of *kasta* supremacy.

However, both Warren and Boon recognise the critiques of such interpretations, which see in the raucous behaviour and destruction of funeral accoutrements symbolic of *kasta* privilege at least a temporary, transient overthrowing of (in the Balinese case) the *kasta* hierarchical world-view. This interpretation may have merit, as far as it goes, but (so the critiques go) the oppositional force of such episodes is limited and restricted to a brief

demonstration of rebellion within a cultural context in which "the ruling conventions permit themselves to be mocked, due to a full confidence in their own power to emerge still more firmly entrenched the following morning" (Bernstein, 1986:106).

Or, in the words of Shakespeare's character Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, "There is no slander in an allow'd fool, though he do nothing but rail" (quoted in Dentith, 1995:73). Dentith cautions against wholesale acceptance of "a version of carnival which stresses its capacity to invert hierarchies and undermine boundaries" (ibid:74). Indeed he proposes that carnival-like occasions, with their extraordinary license for uninhibited action, are often the scene for a contestation of symbols supportive of all political motivations at play in the community - not just those of an oppositional nature.

Discussing the popular *topeng* dance performances in Bali (of which my mother-in-law was an exponent), Boon describes the play on language register used in such performances, in which high-*kasta* language prerogatives and "status puffery" are hilariously debunked. However, in the end, a high-*kasta* figure takes the stage and, with exquisite *alus* language and movement, reinforces in the minds of those watching their earlier conditioning regarding status privilege. In "the very act of undercutting vainglorious language and comportment . . . *topeng* preserves a sampler of the gamut of language and etiquette. *By subverting, it catalogs.*" (1990:90; emphasis in original).

A consideration of the empirical data on large public rituals collected at my fieldsite and in other parts of Bali in the light of the foregoing may be useful. I witnessed a large number of such rituals, many of them village or *banjar*-oriented, but also some of wider scale. I was especially concerned to note any "*kasta*" aspects, if any, evident during these rituals.

An example was the funeral of my wife's uncle, described in Chapter Six. I was interested to see what *kasta* prerogatives would be asserted during the various stages of this funeral, and what anti-*kasta* protests, however muted, might be observable. I had the impression that the deceased, while not unpopular among *banjar* members, had incurred some disapproval for remarrying with a much younger woman, and had, due to ill health, not mixed much with other *banjar* members. While I certainly did not expect his funeral tower to be trashed en route to the cemetery, as described by Bateson and Mead (1942) in cases where the deceased was actually hated by his or her local community, I did take careful note of how the body and its *bade* vehicle were treated by villagers handling proceedings on the day of the cremation.

In the event, as described earlier, the *kasta*-based *patus* Brahmana handled the core work of the funeral, including the physical carrying of the *bade* tower bearing the

deceased's coffin. The *bade* was spun and wheeled around at crossroads along the route to the graveyard, as is always done, and there was the usual noisy commotion - "to confuse the soul of the departed so he won't find his way back home and haunt the place". But I detected no horseplay or worse from the rest of the *banjar* members accompanying the *bade*, that could be regarded as any form of disrespect towards or reversal of *kasta* symbolism (directed, for example, against the Brahmana-specific *bade* tower itself, or specific decoration details on it). If anything, *kasta* privilege was emphasised through the conspicuous handling by the *patus* Brahmana (duly clad in *patus* T-shirts for all to see) of the funeral of one of their own - without any demurral that I could detect from the many low-*kasta banjar* members who also participated.

A different kind of ritual event - one involving the whole village of Sepenan as a unit in every sense - geographical, demographical, *adat* village - was the visit of the *barong* from Tojan village, described in Chapter Five. On this intensely emotional occasion, high-*kasta* villagers participated along with their low-*kasta* neighbours without any concessions made to their status. This kind of ritual was highly focused on the animistic aspects of village *adat* and, I believe, those high-*kasta* villagers who participated (virtually all of them who could attend) did so in a strong spirit of village solidarity, and - crucially - in a ritual context where *kasta* privilege had never intruded. Equally, local high-*kasta* villagers showed no inclination to try to include such privilege into these rites. Consequently, again I detected no apparent "carnavalesque" liberties being taken by low-*kasta* villagers - such as extra-hard jostling of *kasta* elite members or refusal to use *alus* language to them - in these contexts.

On the occasions of *banjar* and village temple *odalan* anniversaries, where again the entire community took part as in effect a religious community congregation, the virtual irrelevance of *kasta* was again evident. I did notice on these occasions some relaxation of the understated formality normally evidenced across the *kasta* divide in daily village intercourse. I recorded several instances of physical horseplay between low-*kasta* men and local Brahmana and Satria that could be interpreted as quietly oppositional, in *banjar*-focused ritual activities where a festival or party atmosphere prevailed. These incidents however were always low-key and accompanied by much hilarity, giving the impression that they were indeed "licensed" in these contexts.

The language register norms, however, were never flouted, which I put down to the close association maintained from birth between the individual and his or her *kasta* title, becoming ultimately an inseparable part of the individual's identity.

During the fieldwork period I attended and filmed a large mass trance ceremony at Pengerebongan temple in Kesiman, Denpasar (see also Suryani and Jensen, 1993). This

day-long and highly dramatic event featured multiple *rangda* witch figures and falling into hysterical trance by a number of participants, dozens of whom performed the *ngurek* quasi self-stabbing with *kris* daggers. Noteworthy for present purposes was the participation of high-*kasta* people (whom I recognised personally) simply as devout Balinese taking part in a significant ritual rooted in pre-*kasta*, ancestor-oriented and animist-tinged religious practice. Although the atmosphere was highly charged - bordering on riotous - there was no element of carnivalesque oppositional (to *kasta*) behaviour for the simple reason that, again, *kasta* was altogether absent and irrelevant to what was happening there.

Indeed, as V. Turner points out in relation to his African material, "in the sacred context of a great public ritual, the divisions and oppositions between corporate groups . . . are 'played down' and forced out of the center of ritual attention" (1985:57). In the Balinese case in point, the sacredness of such community-focused ritual derives from the primordial, chthonian core of the people's religion, to which *kasta* is largely irrelevant.

The question then arises: are these more chthonian rituals something that the *kasta* elite permits the common people, in a sort of "bread and circuses" concession, with the occasional jostling of a high-*kasta* villager simply a "licensed" departure from everyday norms of deference to the elite?

Put another way: is it analytically useful to propose a "high culture" versus "low culture" model of Balinese society, with the *kasta* elite (especially the Brahmana priesthood and their Satria princely allies) representing the custodians of "great tradition" Hinduism and the *anak jaba* commoners representing a cosmologically challenged mass interested more in "orthopraxy" than orthodoxy, and a downright primordial orthopraxy at that? The following section attempts to answer these questions.

Accommodation: ideologies in context

I think it is clear that such black-and-white models hugely oversimplify what in reality was a very complex, situational interplay of ideologies. Predominantly, these include the important, spiritually-based ideologies of *kasta* hierarchy, derived from Vedic Hinduism, and communal egalitarianism, derived from an indigenous cosmology that locates all humankind, without status distinction, as humble stewards of a physical world on loan from the gods.

But other ideologies were also at play. Group or factional identity was a strong factor for many informants, as Geertz and Geertz (1975) had found much earlier. I found

that this need to belong, especially to a named descent group, was expressed by a majority of people. In this, hierarchical status was not necessarily an issue. Many people belonged to low-*kasta* title-groups which functioned basically as Austronesian-style descent groups, stressing their *kawitan* origin temples rather than putative past links to high-*kasta* groups.

There was also what could be called a modernist or reformist ideology, most often raised by educated, urban Balinese. In this view, religious dogma and practice were in sore need of an overhaul to streamline and simplify, in particular, the time-consuming and expensive life-cycle rituals, which definitely involved an element of competition for prestige (regardless of the *kasta* status of the families concerned). Proponents of this view were also often oriented towards modernisation and indeed globalisation, and saw the many calls upon their time to attend village-based ritual as holding themselves and indeed Bali back from true participation in the modernisation process (cf Vickers, 1996; Hobart, 1999, including a nice photograph of a satellite dish on a thatch-roofed house among rice fields).

These observations resonate with what Barth called the "multiple authorities of Bali-Hinduism" (1993:341) and lead us inevitably to the centrality of context for any understanding of how Balinese both reconcile and actively utilise these conflicting ideological perspectives.

Context emerges as the key to social action in much of the empirical data adduced in the present study. Hobart (1986:132 *passim*) stresses the need for multiple perspectives and "contextualising" when attempting any interpretation of Balinese culture. The material presented in earlier Chapters has, I believe, clearly demonstrated both the salience, to various degrees among different individuals, of the hierarchical *kasta* world-view and of the incompatible egalitarian community model, in Balinese society. The co-existence of these apparently contrary ideologies and the relative stability of society overall was made possible by strategies of selective foregrounding of one or the other, depending on context, and accommodation when overt clashes of ideologies occurred.

Hence, in contexts which stressed the indigenous *adat*/cosmology, villagers who happened to be from high-*kasta* groups were perfectly able to participate on equal terms with other villagers. Examples included the monthly *banjar* community meetings, most *banjar* and village temple ceremonies, and the trans-village chthonian ritual described above. These environments constituted an ideological field embraced by all villagers; *kasta* had no place in this context, and generally this was acknowledged by the *kasta* elite themselves.

When a particular group from the *kasta* elite did choose to assert the superiority of hierarchical status over the egalitarianism of the community temple congregation, as happened in Sepenan when the Brahmana refused to pray at the *pura desa* village temple, villagers were prepared to accommodate this by building a special *padmasana* statue in the temple for them.

On the other hand, in quintessential *kasta*-focused environments, such as the major ritual of high-*kasta* families, villagers accepted the use of even rather blatant status symbolism, such as the carrying of high-*kasta* brides on the shoulders of commoner assistants at weddings. And in general daily intercourse, commoners generally conformed to the language register norms required by the *kasta* elite. At the same time, villagers retained the prerogative of boycotting the rituals of high-*kasta* families perceived to be arrogant or to have mistreated villagers. As mentioned earlier, the threat of mass boycott by *banjar* members of the life-cycle rites of a high-*kasta* neighbour - especially funerals - provided an ever-present practical counterbalance to *kasta* ideological supremacy.

In light of this ongoing accommodation and negotiation, as well as the often clear-cut contextualisation of the expression or suppression of multiple ideologies, Geertz and Geertz's original (1975) framing of the clash of hierarchy versus egalitarianism in Bali as a "war without end" seems two-dimensional. That *kasta* ideology continues to be hotly contested by some is clear. My Balinese Pasek activist colleague Gde Pitana, also quoting from the Geertzes, writes that "I would not dare to speculate that *homo aequalis* will soon win the war over *homo hierarchicus*", but is prepared to venture that "[p]ast and present trends show that *homo aequalis* has been gaining ground" (1999:196).

The way ahead: the future of status

Despite the degree of acceptance of and accommodation to it, particularly in rural village environments such as the fieldwork site, there is no doubt that *kasta* hierarchical status will continue to come under pressure from several quarters. Pressure to rationalise and reform Bali-Hinduism has existed at least since colonial times, often involving a harsh critique of the *kasta* aspect (Vickers, 1989:164ff). And the commoner title-groups, led by sections of the Pasek and Pande, will continue their campaign through "hidden transcript" and more public means - notably in the print media - to substitute an egalitarian "difference" for the present *kasta* hierarchy.

Militating against this trend will be the lust for status by various groups engaged in the quest to gain community acceptance for their adoption, using a variety of rationales

mostly invoking rediscovered high-*kasta* ancestry, of *kasta* status-group titles (dubbed "status drives" in Howe, 1989, 1995). One group in Sepenan (the Ngakan) was involved in just such a quest. Of course, such acknowledgement of the extreme desirability of belonging to the *kasta* elite only serves to bolster the latter's public prestige.

Howe makes the point - reminiscent of Weberian "lifestyle" status criteria - that the increase in well-educated, materially successful commoner families "can produce a situation in which a group feels that its ritual status is out of step with its material accomplishments" (1995:17) and is tempted to seek to raise its (*kasta*) status in the sort of status drive he describes.

I would add that the opposite tendency is also at work. As people become busier with "modern sector" activities and the formerly strong link between traditional status and wealth becomes ever more tenuous, some will find that the relevance of *kasta* status falls away. I found this particularly so in the city, but also in rural villages where people had succeeded in business, notably in the tourism industry. One family in Sepenan was in this category, and had begun to earn the ire of certain high-*kasta* neighbours for their lack of "due deference" to their Brahmana *kasta* superiors.

There was no suggestion that this family had become slack in their religious observances. On the contrary, as with many successful commoner families, they lavished money on upgrading the family shrine and spared no expense in celebrating its *odalan* anniversary. The point is that Bali-Hindu religious devotion does not necessarily connote wholehearted embracing of the *kasta* aspect - a point that increasing numbers of Balinese may well be reflecting on in coming years, especially if the religious reform movement gains momentum.

An interesting development in the fieldsite *banjar* of Sepenan Kaja, noted during a return visit in December 2000, was the "fall" of the *klian dinas*, Gus Oman, and indeed of his powerful patron Gus Agung, who had lost his post as Gianyar District Secretary following the "abdication" of former president Soeharto in May 1998. The previously omnipotent Golkar - the government's own political "party" - was out of favour and some officials linked to Golkar found themselves looking for other employment.

Both men had other sources of income and still lived in their respective *gria*. Gung Ngurah, the high Satria village head, had retained his position, but the old axis between the three high-*kasta* local politicians and the Golkar political machine had broken down. In the process, the neat reinforcement of traditional status by the modern political sector had been shaken, with possible ramifications for the future hold on the top administrative posts in the village by members of the status elite. Furthermore, at the provincial governor level,

former governor Ida Bagus Oka - a Golkar stalwart and of course a Brahmana - had been charged with corruption and would probably be tried. He had been much criticised locally for perceived collusion with Jakarta interests seeking to acquire (by fair means or foul, it is alleged) land in Bali for tourist resorts.

The advent of the so-called "reform era" in Indonesia has already seen democratic changes likely to militate against elite group privilege, including the *kasta* elite in Bali. The national press, including the Bali Post, is now much freer in its reporting of contentious issues and oppositional opinion, even in editorials. This trend will provide further scope for debate on the *kasta* system and, numerically at least, critiques of *kasta* should be in the ascendancy. For their part, the *kasta* status-groups - a small minority of the population - will no doubt fight back utilising their established networks, with group members in many key positions in commerce, industry and the administration (easily verifiable by their insistence on using their *kasta* titles).

By all accounts, the "reform era" has to date (early 2001) been a great disappointment, with no apparent let-up in the practice of nepotism (one part of the media's unholy trinity of KKN - *korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme*). This should ensure the continued hiring of fellow status-group members in organisations headed by members of one of the *kasta* elite groups. However, national politics has an uncertain future, with the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (the old PDI), led by Soekarno's daughter Megawati Soekarnoputri, extremely popular in Bali. Golkar is quite unpopular, and officials too closely linked with that organisation no longer secure in their positions (as happened in Sepenan).

Furthermore, regional autonomy has been promulgated (as of January 2001), and the prospect of much greater control by the provinces of their own affairs will doubtless provide a rejuvenated and probably more intense stage for the playing out of regional politics. In this struggle, the role of traditional *kasta* status - under pressure from both the religious reform movement and political reformists deeply suspicious of the *kasta*-Soeharto administration links of the recent past - is likely to be diminished.

Meanwhile, in the city but particularly in the district centres and rural villages of the southern plains heartland of the *kasta* elite, the complex two-way processes of accommodation and negotiation between hierarchical status and egalitarian communalism, between esoteric high Hinduism and the indigenous religion, among the multiple group identities that affect so many, will continue for now - within each individual as within Balinese society.

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